

COPN Update

The General Assembly's Joint Subcommittee studying COPN reform met Monday, November 28, 2016, for the first of three expected meetings. Senator Steve Newman (R-Lynchburg) was elected Chairman and Delegate Bobby Orrock (R-Spotsylvania) was elected Vice Chairman. The members received a staff briefing on the history of COPN in Virginia and reform attempts, a national overview on state COPN laws, and a summary of resources on hospital finances. We have requested and will distribute the presentation materials.

The joint subcommittee will take stakeholder and public testimony at the second meeting and will determine any legislation or workplan at a third meeting right before the General Assembly convenes.

Some notable developments and announcements:

- Senator Newman announced that none of the carry-over legislation from last session would advance at this time in an effort to "respect this process" and look for consensus. He said there's no reason to make legislators vote on measures that the other body won't support.
- The House and Senate highlighted their different views on COPN reform. The House members continued to say that deregulation is needed and it should not be tied to any funding for hospitals, especially given the uncertainty of the ACA. The Senate continues to suggest that in order to pass reform/deregulation they will likely need a funding stream, particularly to secure rural legislator support.
- Senator Newman mentioned that the gubernatorial election will impact how COPN reform advances.
- Senator Siobhan Dunnavant (R-Henrico/Hanover) and Delegate John O'Bannon (R-Henrico) continue to be the thought leaders on the issue for their respective chambers.