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Next Week's Calendar

Session on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday next week.

Legislative News

Senate to host 14 Committee Meetings, with Assembly set to announce its own slate.

Updates from the Governor

New Pop-Up Vaccination Sites

New Funding for Farms to Combat Climate Change

Indoor Family Entertainment Centers Can Open March 26, Outdoor Amusement Parks Can Open April 9 & Camps Can Begin to Plan for Summer Opening

Cannabis Details

Agency News

Gestational Surrogacy Legal

NYSED Seeks Testing Waivers

Winter Break Ends - FY 2022 30 Day Amendments Released

The legislature was not in this week, observing a scheduled winter break that included the annual Presidents Day observance. That being said, there remained a modicum of activity ranging from the ongoing fallout surrounding the reporting of nursing home deaths, to challenges related to expanded vaccine eligibility, to the release of 30-day amendments to the Governor's budget proposal. And yes, the February snow assault continued to plague New York City and other areas of the state.

Nursing Homes - After a number of media reports surfaced regarding conversations related to reporting of COVID related nursing home deaths and a virtual briefing with members of the State Legislature, the Governor released a [full transcript](#) of a February 10 briefing.

Thirty-day Amendments - The Governor released 30-day amendments to his FY 2022 budget proposal Thursday night. The complete amendments can be accessed [here](#).

Along with the expected amendments to the Governor's Adult-Use Cannabis proposal (Part H, S2509/A3009 - see the *From NYS Governor Cuomo* section for more information), the amendments include a [new part GG](#) in the Health and Mental Hygiene bill (S2507/A3007), which includes among others provisions to increase fines for public health law violations; nursing home reforms related to receivership, expenditures for staff and management, and amendments to the current Department of Health temporary operator authorization for hospitals, adult care facilities and clinics. See the related Governor's press release [here](#).

The amendments also include a new part BB in the Education, Labor, and Family Assistance bill (ELFA, S2506/A3006), creating an "emergency [rental assistance](#) local government allocation" program within the State Finance Law. The fund will consist of federal money allocated to local governments specifically for residents with rental issues, and go to those same local governments, pursuant to a plan from the Budget Director. This fund will be used without appropriation.

Vaccinating higher risk populations in other states - As New York State expanded vaccine eligibility this week to individuals with comorbidities, the Kaiser Family Foundation published a review of states' vaccine prioritization on February 16. Unsurprisingly, the report showed a broad variation between states regarding conditions that are eligible and other factors. The report "The Next Phase of Vaccine Distribution: High-Risk Medical Conditions" can be found [here](#).

Tax revenues lower than last year but higher than expected - Comptroller DiNapoli shared the monthly State Cash Report on Thursday, which showed taxed receipts almost \$2 billion lower than last year but \$1.7 billion higher than anticipated by the state Division of Budget. The Report can be accessed [here](#).



From NYS Governor Cuomo

'Pop Up' Vaccination Sites

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo [announced](#) 13 community-based pop-up vaccination sites coming online this week at community centers, public housing complexes and cultural centers. These sites are expected to vaccinate 3,850 people throughout the week.

Climate Change Funding for Farmers

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo [announced](#) \$4 million is being awarded through the Climate Resilient Farming Grant Program to help 80 farms across the state reduce their environmental footprints and prepare for extreme weather events resulting from climate change. The projects selected are projected to reduce greenhouse gases by an estimated 90,000 metric tons of CO2 per year, or as much as eliminating nearly 20,000 cars from the road.

Additional re-opening plans

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo [announced](#) that indoor family entertainment centers and places of amusement can open with a 25 percent capacity limit beginning Friday, March 26. Outdoor amusement parks can open with a 33 percent capacity limit beginning Friday, April 9.

30-Day Amendments to Adult-Use Cannabis Proposal

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo [announced](#) 30-day amendments to the Governor's proposal to establish a comprehensive adult-use cannabis program in New York.

Executive Orders

Governor [Cuomo issued Executive Order 202.94](#) which permitted restaurants, bars, liquor stores and fitness centers to stay open until 11PM.

Legislative news

2021 Legislative Session Days

There is session next week on Monday the 22nd, Tuesday the 23rd, and Wednesday the 24th. You can find the 2021 Legislative Session calendar [here](#).

Legislative Committees

The Senate and Assembly have several committee meetings this week scheduled next week. The Senate will host 14 Committee Meetings ([live stream available on the Senate website](#)), with the Assembly expected to host its own slate of meetings as well ([found here once announced](#)).

Scheduled Public Hearings and Budget Hearings

On March 4th, 2021 the Senate Standing Committee on Labor and Transportation will hold a public hearing to hear about the difficulties of taxi drivers and livery drivers across New York State. [Full schedule here](#).

With regard to [budget hearings](#), hearings on Taxes as well as Economic Development are scheduled for the 23rd, and the Health hearing is scheduled for the 25th.

From the Agencies

Governor Cuomo Announces Gestational Surrogacy Now Legal in New York State 2020 State of the State Proposal Signed into Law Last Year Takes Effect

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced New York's [Gestational Surrogacy Law](#) is now in effect, delivering help to LGBTQ+ couples and couples struggling with fertility who are trying to start families of their own. Originally proposed as part of the Governor's 2020 State of the State Agenda and signed into law as part of the State Budget, the law officially legalizes gestational surrogacy in New York State. Prior to the law's enactment, the practice was illegal in New York State, and gestational surrogacy agreements were unenforceable and considered not legally binding.

New York State Education Department Submits Federal Waivers for State Assessment and Accountability Requirements to U.S. Department of Education

The New York State Education Department today submitted two federal waiver requests related to state assessment and accountability requirements, State Education Commissioner Betty A. Rosa announced. The waiver requests address the unique circumstances caused by the ongoing pandemic that have resulted in many students receiving some or all of their instruction remotely. The full text of the submitted waiver requests is posted on [NYSED's ESSA webpage](#).

