



# State of the Association

## *Tally Our Wins, Not our Losses*



**Eileen Anderson** is the director of Government Relations for SMC Business Councils, which merged with the Manufacturer & Business Association in 2019. Contact

her at [eileenanderson@mbausa.org](mailto:eileenanderson@mbausa.org) or 412/805-5707.

The Manufacturer & Business Association's (MBA) mission is to build a pro-business climate in Pennsylvania. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed us down an undefined path in 2020, a year of never-ending challenges and turmoil. However, we maintained focus on where we could have the most impact for you, our members. Here are some examples.

### The MBA created opportunities to speak with lawmakers:

- U.S. Congressman Glenn Thompson
- Representative Bryan Cutler, PA House Majority Leader
- Representative Donna Oberlander, PA House Majority Whip

### The MBA lobbied lawmakers on priority issues:

- Testified for the PA House Insurance Committee, Association Health Plans (AHPs) – The bill drafted by MBA with other organizations would allow businesses in the small group market to join together in an association. This structure would provide them with the ability to purchase health insurance with the same benefits as those in the large group market, thereby reducing insurance costs.

**STATUS:** AHP legislation is now in the PA House and Senate.

### The MBA provided education about the issues and government:

- Created a new Government Affairs website <https://www.mbausa.org/services-and-benefits/government-affairs/>
- Hosted webinars and meetings:
  - Insurance Carriers Address Health-Care Costs
  - The Cares Act
  - Paycheck Protection Program Loan Forgiveness
- Association Health Plans – Rep. Valerie Gaydos, Sen. Michele Brooks
- Post-Election Briefing – former Congressman Phil English, political analyst Charlie Gerow
- U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross
- Participated in a new podcast series, “Business Today With the MBA” on Money Radio WPSE
- Wrote opinion pieces and was quoted in print and radio
- Initiated a campaign for health-care literacy and published “Health-Care Costs an Employer and Employee Resource.”
- Participated in impact events:
  - Pennsylvania Leadership Conference – Moderated panel, “Free-Market Approach to Affordable Health Care”
  - Moderated candidate debate – Senator Dan Laughlin and Julie Slomski
  - Voiced member concerns with PA Secretary, Department of Community & Economic Development, and stakeholders in a post-shutdown forum

### The MBA helped pass legislation:

- **House Bill 943** – Prohibition of Pharmacy Gag Clauses. **Why it matters:** It may reduce prescription drug costs by allowing pharmacists to tell customers about lower-priced drugs, including generic medications. Previously they were prohibited. Every dollar counts as more people move to high-deductible health plans.

- **House Bill 732** – MBA supported HB 1100, part of a package of legislation to encourage energy production etc. It was vetoed, changed and amended into HB 732. **Why it matters:** It establishes a local resource manufacturing tax credit for firms interested in building petrochemical facilities in the state.
- **Senate Bill 841** – This was a vehicle for several COVID-related provisions including online notarization of documents. **Why it matters:** It also reauthorized the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4). It requires PHC4 to add health-care cost and insurance premiums regional trends and make information more user-friendly. PHC4 addresses the problem of escalating health costs and ensures the quality of health care.
- **Senate Bill 637** – Occupational Licensure Reforms – This overhauls Pennsylvania's outdated occupational licensing laws that deny many qualified residents the right to work because of an old or irrelevant criminal record. **Why it matters:** Pennsylvania needs skilled workers.
- **Senate Bill 67** – MBA supported telemedicine legislation, which failed for the second straight session, but telepsychology passed. SB 67 expands the availability of psychological services through telemedicine. **Why it matters:** This allows psychologists from other states to practice through telecommunications, thereby easing the shortage of psychologists and giving patients greater access to help.
- **House Bill 68** – **Why it matters:** It eases eligibility and access to unemployment compensation for workers who have lost jobs due to COVID. It waives the one-week waiting period, the job search and extends the period of time employers have to apply for relief from charges by increasing the window to 21 days. ■