

Weekly Legislative Update: Health Care

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Celebrate!

A big win for all supporters of keeping secular healthcare alive through **SB 5241** (KOCA) occurred after a hard-fought four-hour debate during a floor hearing in the Senate Thursday evening! Thank you for supporting this priority bill in your meetings with your legislators and all your actions during this and prior sessions!! **Take a moment to thank your Senator for supporting this bill to passage [HERE](#).**

Bills Needing Action This Week

*Remember, only authorized members can speak for the League; the Issue Chairs will do that, so **please leave the "Organization" box blank**. A more powerful influence is many voices speaking for themselves rather than many voices speaking for the League.*

HB 1954 Harmonizing language relating to reproductive healthcare services and gender affirming care. Sponsored by Representatives Riccelli, Bateman, and Ramel this bill seeks to protect providers from disciplinary action given they are acting within the law and standards in Washington. This bill is moving rapidly. It has passed in the House and is now in the Senate and has a public hearing February 15 at 10:30 AM. **Please add your voice to this bill to protect healthcare providers offering needed services.**

 **Sign in PRO on HB 1954 [here](#) by February 14 at 10 PM.**

HB 1979 Reducing the cost of inhalers and epinephrine autoinjectors. Sponsored by Paul and others, this bill amends RCW 48 .43 .780. designates the equivalent rules for these medications as have been made for emergency insulin the co-pay can be applied to the insured's deductible. This bill requires health plans, including health plans offered to public and school employees, to cap the total out of pocket cost for a 30-day supply of asthma inhalers and a two-pack of epinephrine autoinjectors at \$35. It has passed the House and has a public hearing in the Senate on February 15 at 10:30 AM. **This bill needs your support to reduce medication costs for those who can least afford it.**

 **Sign in PRO on HB 1979 [here](#) by February 14 at 10 PM.**

SB 5580 An Act relating to Improving maternal health outcomes. This bill sponsored by Senator Muzzall and ten others raises the federal poverty index to 210 percent for pregnant and postpartum women by November 1, 2024. It as well addresses a key issue in postpartum care for women and their newborns by directing the healthcare authority to create a post-delivery post-partum and transitional program for those women suffering from substance use disorder at the time of delivery by extending the post-partum stay. It additionally requires the HCA to update the current Maternal Support Service to address equity, and to improve birth and perinatal outcomes by January 1, 2025. This bill has passed the Senate and has a public hearing in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on February 14. **Add your support to progress to the finish for this important legislation for women.**

 **Sign in PRO on SB 5580 [here](#) by February 13 at 10 PM.**

SJM 8006 Requesting that the Federal Government create a Universal Health Care Program.

This bill sponsored by Senator Hasegawa, Cleveland, Billig, Kuderer, Lovelett, Nugyen, Shewmake, Stanford, Valdez, and Wilson, C. is a joint memorial to the Federal Government which requests the Government to create a single payor Universal Healthcare program and if it will not or the Government should provide Washington State with the necessary waivers allowing the State to develop, define, and fund our own. It is a statement to Washington DC that we the people of Washington want Universal Healthcare funded by a single payor system separate from employment. The bill has passed the Senate and has a hearing in the House on 2/14/24. **This memorial needs our voices to push it to the finish.**

 **Sign in PRO on SJM 8006 [here](#) by February 13 at 10 PM.**

Bills We Support

HB 1881/SB 5821 Establishing a uniform standard for creating an established relationship for the purposes of coverage of audio-only telemedicine services. Sponsored by Representative Harris this bill Establishes a uniform standard for creating an established relationship for the purposes of coverage of audio only telemedicine services by expanding the time in which a healthcare provider has seen the patient and removing the expiration of provisions allowing for the use of real-time interactive appointments using both audio and video technology. SB 5821 has passed in the Senate and is waiting for a public hearing in the House committee on Health and Wellness.

HB 1889 Allowing persons to receive professional licenses and certifications regardless of immigration or citizenship status. Sponsored by Representative Walen this bill provides eligibility for certain professional and commercial licenses, certifications, permits, and registrations for various professions for persons not lawfully present in the United States. Permits applicants for licensure, certification, or registration to provide an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number in lieu of a Social

Security number. A substitute bill was passed by the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Business on January 26. The substitute bill expands the businesses and professions covered by the original bill. The bill was passed in the House on February 9, 2024.

HB 1969/SB 5811 Expanding the definition of family member for individual providers. Related to in-home health care providers (relatives). Sponsored by Representative Alvarado, this bill broadens the definition to include family members providing care who have not been able to be reimbursed previously but provides the same guidelines. SB 5811 passed in the Senate. HB 1969 is in Rules.

HB 2166 Increasing access to portable orders to life sustaining-sustaining treatment. Sponsored by Representatives Paul and Shavers this bill will clarify for emergency personnel what alternative types of forms may be used to in guide treatment on an individual's choices regarding life sustaining treatment. The bill also requires the Department of Health to maintain a Registry of individuals who have submitted this information. An amendment to the bill was introduced and accepted.

SB 5241/HB 1263 Concerning material changes to the materials and operation structure of participants in the healthcare marketplace (previously Keep Our Care Act (KOCA)). Sponsored by Senator Randall this bill seeks to limit mergers and acquisitions of hospitals and healthcare facilities. Passage gives the Attorney General further legal grounds to investigate and intervene in cases where takeover of a secular healthcare facility limits choice in personal healthcare decision making. This is particularly of concern in end of life, gender affirming care and the whole of reproductive healthcare. **Passed the Senate!**

SB 5986/HB 2285 Protecting consumers from out-of-network healthcare service charges. This bill sponsored by Senator Cleveland and Muzzall and others seeks to prevent consumers being charged out-of-network fees by ambulance companies for emergency and non-emergency treatment and transportation (including air ambulance services) as well as behavioral health emergency and non-emergency transport. Insurance carriers must include in-network information to members. Has passed the Senate and awaits a hearing in the House.

SJR 8202/HB 4201 Senate Joint Resolution. Amending the State Constitution to address reproductive freedom. This resolution will require passage by two-thirds of the membership in both the House and Senate and if passed will be voted on by the voters in the next general election. Sponsored by Senators Keiser and Kuderer and fourteen others. This bill is retained in Rules in its present status.

Bills We Are Watching

No bills at this time.

Bills We Oppose

No bills at this time.

How You Can Be Involved

- Local Leagues in Washington have action chairs who coordinate action teams. Some local Leagues have health care committees or individuals with a healthcare interest to work with so you can take action locally. Contact your local League action chair to find out, join, and get active.
- Please work with LWVWA Healthcare Issue Chairs and become involved with our Healthcare Affinity group. We welcome your perspectives as we determine our support for legislation and prepare testimony for the session. Contact us to be added to the Healthcare Affinity Group membership. We can make a difference if we act together!
- To learn more or to become more involved contact, [Jody Disney](#), Healthcare Issue Chair or [Tressa Kenter](#), Healthcare Advocate.