

Weekly Legislative Update: Health Care

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The last cutoff day to pass bills from their house of origin is 4/12/23. The Senate has outlined and passed their budget and the House has plunked its budget on the Senate's. The Lobby Team will give input for the League on where our priorities are for the budget. As of this writing, here is where things are for bills we are following. The most important thing you can do is to thank legislators for the bills you're happy about, and ask them to work to pass the others in the next session.

As always, the most effective influence we can have really is for many voices speaking for themselves rather than many voices speaking for the League. Remember to speak for yourself. The Issue Chairs will speak for the League. **Learn how to participate [HERE](#).**

This week I'm asking you to act on a new bill related to protecting the drug Mifepristone, how it is critical for reproductive health care and how we can protect its use in Washington. There is great opposition to the bill, it needs your support.

[SB 5768](#) Protecting access to abortions medications. Just introduced after being requested by Governor Inslee. The bill is sponsored by Senator Keiser and sixteen others in the Ways & Means Committee. The bill authorizes the department of corrections to acquire, sell, deliver, distribute, and dispense abortion medications under its own license.

SIGN in PRO: [HERE](#)

Health Care Staffing Bills – Update

[E2SSB 5236](#) Concerning hospital staffing standards. Sponsored by Sen. Robinson and fourteen others. Relating to improving nurse and health care worker safety and patient care by establishing minimum staffing standards in hospitals, requiring hospital staffing committees to

develop staffing plans, addressing mandatory overtime and meal and rest breaks, and providing for enforcement. **It has passed many hurdles and weakened to some degree. It has passed out of executive session in the House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards after considerable negotiation between WSHA & WSNA and was referred to Appropriations on 3/23/23. This bill has passed!**

[E2SSB 5278](#) Implementing audit recommendations to reduce barriers to home care aide certification. Sponsored by Sen. L. Wilson and eight others. Requires the departments of Health and Social and Health Services to address delays between training and testing, the lack of test sites, and performance and contract management processes, and submitting a report to the Governor and Legislature no later than June 30, 2024. **2nd substitute Passed unanimously on the floor 3/1/23. Passed out of executive session in the House Post-Secondary Ed. Committee 3/24/23 and has been scheduled for a Public Hearing in Appropriations 4/1/23 at 9am and for Executive Session 4/4. This bill has passed both houses!**

[SB 5454](#) Concerning industrial insurance coverage for posttraumatic stress disorders affecting registered nurses. Sponsored by Sen. Cleveland and eleven others. Provides industrial insurance coverage for posttraumatic stress disorders affecting registered nurses. **2nd substitute Passed and scheduled for an executive session in the House Labor & Workplace Standards 3/24/23 where it passed without further amendment. It has been referred to Appropriations for Public Hearing 4/1/03 at 9am and Executive Session 4/4/23. Passed both houses!**

[HB 1593](#) Concerning industrial insurance coverage for posttraumatic stress disorders affecting registered nurses. Sponsored by Rep. Macri and eleven others. This is a companion bill to SB 5454, see description above.

[E2SSB 5582](#) Reducing barriers and expanding educational opportunities to increase the supply of nurses in Washington. Sponsored by Sen. Holy and twenty others. Requires the state board for community and technical colleges to develop a plan to increase credential opportunities in nursing. Creates nursing education opportunities at community and technical colleges and within the Department of Veterans Affairs. Modifies program approval and training requirements under the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission. Will create the High School Student Certified Nursing Assistant Pilot Program. **2nd Substitute passed and was referred to Post-Secondary Education Committee for Executive Session on 03/24/23 where action was taken. It has been referred to Appropriations for Public Hearing 4/1/23 at 9am and Executive Session 4/4/23. Passed both houses!**

Continue to Act on Reproductive Freedom and Care

SB 5242 Prohibits cost sharing for abortion. Sponsored by Senator Cleveland and sixteen others. Companion bill to HB 1115 (description for this bill is provided below). **Passed on 2/28/23 by 10 votes. In Executive Session on 3/22/23 it passed in the House Health and Wellness Committee. It was referred to Appropriations on 3/24/23. Scheduled for Executive Session 3/31/23. Passed both houses!**

HB 1115 Cost Sharing for Abortions. Sponsored by Representative Bateman and seventeen others. This bill seeks to end the practice of copays and coinsurance preventing some women from obtaining abortion care. **It was heard and referred to the Healthcare & Wellness Committee on 1/9/23.**

SB 5351 Addressing the collection, sharing, and selling of consumer health data. Companion bill to HB 1155 described below. **Referred to Law & Justice on 1/12/23.**

ESHB 1155 Addressing the collection, sharing, and selling of consumer health data. Establishes consumer rights regarding health data; defines obligations of regulated entities that collect, process, share, and sell consumer health data. Prohibits selling consumer health data without a valid authorization. Prohibits implementing a geofence to track or collect data from consumers who enter certain health care entities. **This bill with amendments has unfortunately been weakened significantly. 1st substitute passed; it had an executive session 3/22/23 and passed with an amendment in Senate Law & Justice. Hopefully this bill can be strengthened when it moves to a floor vote. It passed Rules 3/24/23 and is now on the Floor Calendar! This bill sadly passed without the strong protections which were needed.**

SB 5400 Concerning actions by health professions' disciplining authorities against license holders and applicants. This bill seeks to protect healthcare license holders or applicants from having action taken against them for providing gender affirming or reproductive healthcare. Companion bill to HB 1340 described below. Sponsored by Senator Salomon and sixteen others. **First reading was 1/16/23.**

ESHB 1340 Concerning actions by health professionals disciplining authorities against applicants and license holders. Sponsored by Rep. Riccelli and twenty-four others. **Passed unanimously 2/28/23, had an executive session on 03/14/23 where it passed and is now on the Floor Calendar! Has passed both houses!**

SB 5489 Concerning access to reproductive health care services and gender affirming treatment in Washington state. Sponsored by Senator Trudeau and Wellman and thirteen

others. This bill provides legal protection for individuals who provide or receive protected health care services from lawsuits or criminal cases commenced in other states. This is a companion bill to HB 1469 described below. This bill has been referred to the Health & Long-term Care Committee. It was heard in the Senate Law & Justice Committee 1/24/23; **It was then passed on 1/27/23 to Rules for a second reading. This bill has been moved to the "X" files.**

[ESHB 1469](#) Concerning access to reproductive services and gender affirming treatment in Washington state. Sponsored by Representatives Hansen and Thai and twenty-five others. This is a companion bill to SB 5489 described above. **First substitute passed 2/28/23, referred to Senate Law & Justice where it had an executive hearing public hearing 3/22/23 and was referred to Ways & Means where it had a public hearing 3/30/23 and was moved to Executive Session on 4/3/23. On the floor calendar!**

Other Bills We Support

All bills require your attention and action by emailing your legislators or calling them and letting them know they are important to you as their constituent. [Get their emails here: Washington State Legislature.](#)

Senate Bills

[SB 5036](#) Concerning telemedicine. This is a companion bill to HB 1027 (described below). Sponsored by Senator Muzzall. **This bill passed narrowly in the House Healthcare & Wellness committee as of this writing and was passed 2/1/23 and was signed by the Governor!**

[2SSB 5103](#) Concerning payment to acute care hospitals for difficult to discharge Medicaid patients. Patients in hospitals in small communities are waiting to be discharged to other placement such as a nursing home bed. This bill will protect these hospitals which smaller and rural communities cannot afford to lose. Sponsored by Senator Muzzall. There was a comprehensive work session, and the bill had a public hearing in the Health and Long-Term Care Committee on 1/17/23. **2nd substitute passed 2/23/23 unanimously. It had a public hearing in the House Health & Wellness and is scheduled for Executive Session on 3/28/23 at 1:30 pm and has been moved to Appropriations where it has a Public Hearing 4/1/23 at 9am and Executive Session 4/4/23. Passed both houses!**

[ESSB 5179](#) Increasing access to the provisions of the Death with Dignity Act. This is a companion bill to HB 1281 described below (which was introduced in the house this past week and has been championed by Rep. Skylar Rude for many years.) This senate bill is sponsored by Senator Pederson and nineteen others. This bill has faced opposition principally due to religious beliefs. The League has supported this bill over many years. **1st substitute passed by**

only 8 votes 2/27/23. It had a 1st reading and public hearing. It passed narrowly in Executive session 3/10/23. Signed by the Governor!

SSB 5499 Concerning the multistate nursing licensure compact. A bill sponsored by Senator Mullet and six others would seek changes in existing law to allow Washington state to cooperate with other states so that Registered Nurses with a Washington license or a nurse from another state with agreed to regulations might work in another state and vice versa. Compacts exist in 29 other states and make relocating for nurses and recruiting for hospitals more possible. **1st substitute passed 3/6/23 and is referred to Postsecondary Education & Workforce. It had an executive session 3/24/23 where action was taken. It has been referred to Appropriations and has a Public Hearing 4/1/23 at 9am and Executive Session 4/4/23. Passed legislation!**

SB 5519 Improving Health Care Consumer Affordability through the Health Care Cost Transparency board. Sponsored by Sen. Robinson and eleven others. This is a companion bill to HB 1508. **It was heard and referred to Health & Long-Term Care 1/23/23.**

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 cannot 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. **In Healthcare & Wellness there was a public hearing on 3/24/23, executive session scheduled for 3/28/23 at 1:30pm. It is now in Rules.**

House Bills

HB 1027 Concerning telemedicine. Extending the Telemedicine time frame option (until 01/2017) in which real-time telemedicine using both audio and video technology may be used and has important consequences for the underserved, frail, and elderly especially in rural communities. Sponsored by Rep. Riccelli and eighteen others and has bipartisan support. This bill was moved to the committee on health and healthcare and heard, in Executive Session on 1/13/23 and received a Do Pass recommendation and referred to Rules where it was relieved of further consideration **Now returned to Rules for 2nd reading.**

ESHB 1222 Requiring coverage for hearing Instruments. This bill passed out of the house and is scheduled for executive session this week. Sponsored by Representative Orwall and sixteen others. **1st substitute passed 2/28/23, it was heard in executive session, 3/16/23 passed with amendments and sent to Rules. It has passed both Houses!!**

HB 1281 Increasing access to the provisions of the Death with Dignity Act. Sponsored by Representative Rude and twenty-one others. **Returned to Rules for a 2nd reading and now is on the Floor calendar.**

ESHB 1678 Establishing and authorizing the profession of dental therapy. This bill will define the profession of dental therapy and how it will fit within the dental team but allows it only to exist within federally qualified health centers. This is a bill long supported by the League as it promises to improve access to dental care for underserved pockets of the broader community. **Thank you for your actions, it is on the Floor Calendar!!**

How You Can Be Involved

- Local Leagues in Washington have action chairs who coordinate action teams. Some local Leagues have health care teams or individuals with a healthcare interest to work with so you can take action locally. Contact your local League action chair to find out and join.
- 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 Kim Abbey to be added to our Healthcare Affinity Group: kabbey48@gmail.com.