

Weekly Legislative Update: **Healthcare**

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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.*

SB 5241 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.**

Is having choices in your healthcare decision making important to you? This bill if passed, will allow the Attorney General's Office to review and have input on mergers and acquisitions prior to the final agreement.

⚠️ [Click here](#) to send a letter to your Senator and **tell them this issue is important to you.**

Here is sample language you may cut and paste:

Dear Senator,

SB 5241 is important to me as your constituent. Please vote to support legislation to maintain secular healthcare. If only religious based institutions own our healthcare individual choices and freedoms in decision making will continue to be eroded.

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. This bill was passed in the Health Care and Wellness committee 1/12/24 and has been referred to Appropriations. It is scheduled for a hearing on 1/25/24 at 4pm.

⚠️ [Sign In PRO on HB 1969 here.](#)

Bills We Support

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 as long as they are acting within the law and standards in Washington. This bill is moving rapidly.

HB1979 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. No action was taken in Executive Session on 1/19/24.

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.

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. The bill was introduced, no action was taken in Executive Session 1/19/23.

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. This bill passed in Executive Session on 1/19/24 and was referred to Ways & Means.

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.

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. Passed the Senate 1/19/24!!

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

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. This bill was passed in the Health Care and Wellness committee 1/12/24 and has been referred to Appropriations. It is scheduled for a hearing on 1/25/24 at 4pm.

HB 2176 Improving access to patient care by increasing preventive dental care. This bill would permit untrained dental assistants to perform work that should be done by trained and credentialed dental hygienists.

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

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Group membership. We can make a difference if we act together!

- To learn more or get more involved contact, [Jody Disney](#), Healthcare Issue Chair.