

Weekly Legislative Update: Health Care

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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.*

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 Health Care and House Health & Wellness Committees! A copy of ESJM 8006 is [HERE](#).

 **Please contact your legislators to support ESJM 8006 and request it be on the floor calendar [here](#).**

A sample note to legislators is below:

Dear Legislators,

I am in support of SJM 8006, requesting that the Federal Government create a Universal Health Care Program. I ask that SJM 8006 be pulled out of the Rules Committee and brought to the floor for a vote. I ask then you support this Memorial when it comes up for a vote.

Bills We Support

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, and out of Senate Committee on Labor & Finance on February 20. It has now been placed on the floor calendar for a vote.**

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 both the House and the Senate!**

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 and the House policy committees and had a hearing in the House Committee on Appropriations; it is scheduled for Executive Hearing February 26 at 10:30 AM.** HB 1969 has been placed in the Rules X file.

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. **It passed the House and the Senate Health and Long-Term Care Committee on February 21. It has now been passed to the Rules Committee for 2nd reading.**

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. Thank you for supporting this priority bill in your meetings with your legislators and all your actions during this and prior sessions!! **It had a public hearing in the House Committee on Appropriations February 23rd and is scheduled for Executive Session February 26 at 10:30 AM.**

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 both the Senate and House policy committees. On February 21st the bill was heard by the House Committee on Appropriations and is scheduled for Executive Session on February 26, at 10:30 AM.**

SB 5821 Establishing a uniform standard for creating an established relationship for the purposes of coverage of audio-only telemedicine services. Sponsored by Senator Muzzall 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. **The bill has passed both Policy Committees and has been referred to Rules.**

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. **The bill has passed the Senate and House Healthcare policy committees. It had a public hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on February 23rd and has an Executive Hearing on February 26 at 10:30 AM.**

Bills We Are Watching

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 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.