

Weekly Legislative Update: **Health Care**

Issue Team Chair: Jody Disney

Contact: jdisney@lwvwa.org

February 12, 2023

As we continue to move quickly through the session many bills likely to move forward from their policy committee will be heard in an Executive session and move to their next committee. Others will move to the other house. Thank you for the many actions you are taking!

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

Take Action on Reproductive Freedom and Care:

Many priority bills related to reproductive choice are moving through committees. If you do not see your Senator or Representatives sponsoring these bills you can contact them and send an email [HERE](#). There are a variety of ways you act, so note my suggestions of where you can make a difference:

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 and sixteen others, 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. **This bill was heard in the Senate Law & Justice committee on 1/24/23 and 1/26/23. It is scheduled for Executive Session on 2/16/23. If your Senator is not a sponsor yet email [HERE](#) and ask them to do so.**

HB 1263 Concerning material changes to the materials and operation structure of participants in the healthcare marketplace (previously Keep Our Care Act (KOCA)). Companion Bill to SB 5241 (Described above). This bill is sponsored by Representatives Simmons, Stonier, Macri and Pollet in the house. This bill has been referred to the Civil Rights and Judiciary Committee.

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) was heard in Senate Law & Justice 1/24/23. Executive action was taken on 1/31/23 and received a Do Pass Recommendation. It was referred to Ways & Means on 2/1/23. **It is scheduled for a public hearing in Senate Ways & Means on 2/13/23. [Sign in PRO HERE](#)**

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 5260 Protecting and assisting Washington employers providing access to or benefits for reproductive healthcare services. Sponsored by Senator Keiser and sixteen others. A companion bill to HB 1286. Bill description is provided with the house bill. **It was heard in Senate Labor & Commerce 1/24/23.**

HB 1286 Protecting and assisting Washington employers that provide access to, or benefits for, reproductive health care services. Sponsored by Rep. Berry and eighteen others. This bill establishes a cause of action for a Washington-based employer to recover damages and costs incurred from a judgment entered in another state based on the employer providing, or providing assistance for, reproductive health care services. It was heard in the Labor & Workforce Committee on 1/24/23.

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. Sponsored by Senator Salomon and sixteen others. First reading was 1/16/23 in Health & Long-Term Care.

HB 1340 Concerning actions by health professionals disciplining authorities against applicants and license holders. Sponsored by Rep. Riccelli and twenty-four others. **This bill was passed out of the Healthcare Committee on 1/27/23 passed to Rules to Review on 1/31/23.**

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 committee in Senate Law & Justice 1/24/23; **was heard in Executive Committee on 1/26/23 at 8am and received a Do Pass Recommendation. It was then passed on 1/27/23 to Rules for a second reading.**

HB 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. The bill was referred to the House Civil Rights & Judiciary Committee for a hearing on 1/24/23 and **was heard in Executive Session on 1/27/24 receiving a Do Pass recommendation and passed to Rules for a second reading.**

SB 5501 Establishing a public education program to reduce the incidence of stillbirth using a platform for recording and tracking fetal movements. This bill is sponsored by Senator Keiser and three others. Fetal death and stillbirths are a significant issue across the country. In Washington both Indigenous and APIPA mothers suffer significantly elevated rates of fetal death. **There was a public hearing on 2/7/23 and an Executive session on 2/10/23 where no action was taken. If your Senator is on the Health and Long-Term Care Committee, please email them [HERE](#).**

SJR 8202 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 had a public hearing in Senate Health & Long-term Care Committee on 1/24/23 at 8am and was heard in Executive Session on 1/31/23 and received a Do Pass recommendation. **It has been passed to Rules as of 2/1/23.**

HJR 4201 House Joint Resolution. This is a companion bill to SJR 8202 which was heard in the Senate Health and Long-Term care committee on 1/24/23. Sponsored by Representative Gregerson and thirty-four others and it is currently waiting for a hearing in the House Healthcare and Wellness committee.

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 has passed through the Senate and has moved on to the house and referred to the house Health Care & Wellness Committee. Thanks for taking action!**

SB 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. **Executive action was taken on the first substitute bill, do pass. Referred to Ways & Means 2/8/23. Thanks for taking action!**

SB 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. The bill had a public hearing on February 2, 2023. **Executive action was taken on 2/9/23. 1st substitute bill was submitted and received a do pass. Thank you for taking action!!**

SB 5373 Requiring equal reimbursement for advanced registered nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and physicians. This bill would require health plans (other than health maintenance organizations) to reimburse Advanced Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants at the same rate as physicians when they perform the same service. The bill defines the positions and includes behavioral health. The bill becomes effective for health plans after 1/1/2024. The bill requires the Dept. of Insurance to study the impact of the bill and produce a report in 2025. **It was heard in the Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care 1/31/2023.**

SB 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 a compact agreement could practice in Washington. The first reading was on 1/20/23 and has been referred to the Health and Long-term committee. **There was a public hearing on 2/10/23. It was passed with an amendment.**

SB 5519 Improving Health Care Consumer Affordability through the Health Care Cost Transparency Board. The prime sponsor is Senator Robinson along with twelve others. This is a companion bill to HB 1508 described below. The bill was referred to the Health and Long-Term Care Committee in the Senate.

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. **It is on the floor calendar.**

HB 1035 Prohibiting healthcare entities from restricting certain healthcare services by health care providers. This bill clarifies that health care providers have agency in what services can be provided if they are within scope of practice and approved by Department of health (DOH). We will be following this bill. Sponsored by Representative Walen. The bill was heard in committee on 1/17/23.

HB 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. Scheduled for Executive session on 1/27/23 at 8 am where it was heard in Executive Session and received a DO Pass recommendation **and referred to Appropriations where it was heard on 2/8/23. There was a public hearing and executive action was taken.**

HB 1281 Increasing access to the provisions of the Death with Dignity Act. Sponsored by Representative Rude and twenty-one others. **It was heard in committee and received executive action on 2/3/23 and received a do pass, it was referred to Rules on 2/7/23. Thanks for taking action!**

HB 1508 Improving Health Care Consumer Affordability through the Health Care Cost Transparency Board. Sponsored by Representative Macri and thirteen others. This bill directs the Board to study consumer underinsurance, consider the role of profit as a driver of spending and directs the Board to study the role of non-profit tax breaks on spending as well as other important considerations. This bill was scheduled for an Executive session on 2/8/23 at 1:30pm. **No action was taken. The bill was heard again on 2/10/23 and action was taken. Thank you for taking action.**

HB 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 only. 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.

The bill had a public hearing on 2/7/23 at 1:30pm and is scheduled for executive session on 2/15/23. Thank you for taking action!

Bills We Oppose

SB 5098 Prohibiting abortion based on Down syndrome. This bill was sponsored by Senator Padden and three others. The bill seeks to control a person's freedom to make medical choices

and interferes with an individual's bodily autonomy. **It has not been heard in the policy committee as of yet.**

SB 5184 Considering Anesthesia Assistants. This bill is sponsored by Senator Rivers and six others. (The companion bill is [HB 1038](#).) This bill seeks a new classification of assistants to anesthesiologists. This bill, instead of lifting and supporting Certified Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) who are critical to the existing healthcare workforce especially in rural communities, has the potential to undermine them. CRNAs are an independent and well-established profession with an exemplary educational program at Gonzaga. Had public hearings respectively on 1/20/23 and on 1/31/23.

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 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.