

Weekly Legislative Update: **Health Care**

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Bills Needing Action This Week

Please read Bills We Support to see the latest status of other bills.

Governor Inslee focused on three main areas during his “State of the State” address to the legislature this week. If you heard the address, you already know his foremost concerns and budget requests will be for housing and homelessness, judicial reform, and protecting reproductive freedom. Of course, within those main priority categories he outlined a multitude of pieces of legislation and budget items will also need your attention. Along with other new and resubmitted bills, this proves to be an exciting session!

Sign in “Pro” for the following bill this week:

You may express support for bills in hearings with the online process. 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 really to have many voices speaking for themselves rather than many voices speaking for the League.

HB 1222 Requiring coverage for hearing Instruments. Sponsored by Representative Orwall and 16 others. This bill has expanded to include everyone who requires hearing instruments. It is an access to care issue the League has consistently supported.

Sign In Pro here:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/Testifier/Add?chamber=House&mId=30347&aId=148920&caId=20415&tId=3>

Reproductive Freedom Focused Legislation

With the historical consequence of the 50th anniversary of Roe v. Wade coming up and the Governor’s address this past week, and although these bills are not in committee this week, **they require your attention and action now** by emailing your legislators and letting them know this is important to you as their constituent. **Get their emails here:** [Washington State Legislature](https://www.wa.gov/legislature)

[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 the Senate Bill 5241 (Described below). This bill is sponsored by Representatives Simmons, Stonier, Macri and Pollet in the house. This bill has been referred to the Civil Rights and Justice Committee.

[HB 1115](#) Cost Sharing for Abortion Care. Sponsored by Representative Bateman and seventeen others. This bill seeks to end the practice of copays and coinsurance preventing women from obtaining abortion care.

[SB 5242](#) Prohibits cost sharing for abortion. Sponsored by Senator Cleveland and sixteen others. Companion bill to HB 1115.

[HJR 4201](#) House Joint Resolution. This is a companion bill to SJR 8202. Sponsored by Representative Gregerson and thirty-two others.

[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 requires our steadfast support.

[SB 5241](#) Concerning material changes to the materials and operation structure of participants in the healthcare marketplace (previously Keep Our Care Act (KOCA)). ([Washington State Legislature](#)). 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 referred to Senate Law & Justice committee.

Other Bills We Support

[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. This bill was moved to the committee on health and healthcare. Sponsored by Representative Riccelli and eighteen others. It was heard in executive session.

[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 as we look for amendments. Sponsored by Representative Walen.

SB 5036 Concerning telemedicine. This is a companion bill to HB 1027. Sponsored by Senator Muzzall.

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. Executive action was taken and the bill was passed in the Health and Long Term Care Committee on 1/13/23.

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.

How You Can Be Involved

- Local Leagues in Washington have action chairs who coordinate action teams. Some local Leagues have health care teams to 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.