

ADVOCACY

Advocating for Wyoming Doctors and their Patients Since 1903

Bills of interest to the Wyoming Medical Society are tracked on a spreadsheet and regularly updated. To access the spreadsheet, [CLICK HERE](#). The WMS Board of Trustees establishes positions on legislation on behalf of the association. Any member is welcome to request that WMS reconsider a position on an issue, or take another issue under review

Up Next Week:

The Senate Labor Committee will be debating the mandatory CME for prescribers on Monday and the optometry scope of practice expansion bill on Wednesday. Senate Judiciary will debate the Protection of children-child endangerment amendments on Monday.



Off to the Races

The 65th Legislature closed out the first week of the 2019 General Session with 234 bills and resolutions filed and posted which is almost exactly 100 fewer than at the close of the first week of the 2018 Budget Session. The week kicked-off with the inauguration of five statewide elected officials and incoming legislators. Governor Gordon set the tone for the week delivering his first State of the State address on Wednesday. Among a myriad of topics the Governor touched on Wyoming healthcare highlighting the state's first Veterans Skilled Nursing facility, his belief that the state has an obligation to improve access to mental healthcare for our veterans, first-responders and ultimately all of our citizens. Governor Gordon later touched on the importance of broadband internet coverage throughout the state and the role it plays in saving lives because of what it affords in advances in telehealth. To see a full transcript of the Governor's State of the State [CLICK HERE](#).

Historically, General Sessions have lasted 40 days but this year the Legislative Management Council reduced the session to 35 days with the plan of extending the 2020 Budget Session to 25 days rather than 20.



WMS Doc of the Day

Thank you to our volunteers who serve the Wyoming Legislature and staff during the session. WMS is proud of our physicians who care for our Senators and Representatives.

- Kristy Van Kirk, MD
- Kristina Behringer, MD
- JJ Chen, MD
- David Fall, MD

How To Connect:

The Wyoming Legislature has a new website and it's wonderful! The website was available in beta form last year and is in full-swing this year providing users an easier way to navigate legislative bills, legislative contacts and session schedules, visit <http://wyoleg.org>

While the primary purpose of the budget session is funding state government for the biennium, the General Session serves to fund supplemental budget requests from state agencies and then focus efforts on policy initiatives for the state. WDH was only funded for one year of the two-year biennium during the 2018 Session so must receive appropriations this Session to fund the second year of the biennium.

In other Department news, Governor Gordon announced that Director Tom Forslund will be handing over the reins of WDH to former Qwest executive Mike Ceballos at the end of Session. Ceballos comes to WDH with a wealth of corporate management experience and is up to the challenge of leading one of the state's largest agencies and one so close to the lives of WMS members and their patients.

The WMS Voice in Health Policy will be as active as ever this year with the legislative tracking sheet already highlighting more than 20 bills. The legislature has through the end of the month to post bills and we anticipate a lot of healthcare specific initiatives this year. The WMS Board of Trustees will meet Saturday, January 19, in Cheyenne and invites all members to look through the listing of bills and provide feedback to your county trustee, WMS leadership or WMS staff so it can be included in the policy position decisions making. This session will feature a great deal of debate on scope of practice from licensing naturopaths and expanding scope of practice for optometrists into surgery to debating the appropriateness of physical therapists engaging in the practice of medicine by conducting electrodiagnostic tests on patients and seeking to lift any requirement for physician referral or prescription. Below are some highlights of the past week's activities at the capitol.

Bills of Interest this week spanned a broad range of interest areas from Medicaid funding midwifery services and prescription limits on opioid prescriptions to physical therapy direct access proposals.

HB0006: Physical therapy-scope of practice revisions removes physician prescription requirements for PT services after 12 visits or 30 days, whichever comes first. WMS negotiated common space early in the year with physical therapists vowing support for their pursuit of direct access in exchange for their commitment, as an association, to not engage in the practice of medicine with electrodiagnostic testing, specifically needle EMG and nerve conduction studies. Since our agreement, the PT Assn. has shifted their original position and now believes electrodiagnostic testing is within the scope of physical therapy. WMS will now work to amend the bill on the House floor to clarify the important delineating line between medicine and physical therapy.

HB0043 Midwife services-Medicaid passed out of committee on Friday afternoon. The bill authorizes state Medicaid to reimburse certified nurse midwives and licensed lay midwives for services. When WMS inquired about

the bill we were told the State Plan already provides for payment of midwifery services and that the WDH doesn't anticipate any meaningful financial impact given the low numbers of midwives practicing in the state.

SF0046 Opioid prescription limits passed out of the Senate Labor committee Friday morning with a few minor amendments. The bill earned WMS support throughout the interim period as the legislative opioid Taskforce debated meaningful ways to help Wyoming address growing concerns with opioid addiction and abuse.

What's up Next Week?

Next week will be an action-packed week with several important legislative items up in committee for debate. The optometric scope of practice expansion (SF0055) wherein optometrists are seeking access to therapeutic lasers and other advanced surgical procedures as well as expanded prescriptive authority will be up for consideration by the Senate Labor Committee. WMS has worked closely with the Wyoming Ophthalmological Society (WOS) throughout the process and together the groups have made attempts to strike compromise with the optometrists but ultimately to no avail. Wednesday's hearing will determine the fate of the bill and WMS hopes that legislators will recognize the value and importance that hands-on residency training plays in training a professional to safely enter surgical space when caring for Wyoming's patients. Stay tuned as WMS may be calling on members to contact their legislators about this issue in the coming days.

The Senate Judiciary Committee will be hearing SF0060: Protection of children-child endangerment amendments first thing Monday morning. This bill aims to enhance the ability to perform a medical examination on a child living in the same household as a child who has been confirmed the victim of abuse.

The Senate Labor Committee will also be considering SF0047-Controlled substances education and administration, an Opioid Taskforce bill mandating continuing medical education for controlled substances early in the week. WMS recognizes that not all members are amendable to the proposal and hopes that the great latitude the bill grants the licensing boards to determine the details of the CME, as well as exceptions to the mandate, will ease some concern about the bill. WMS worked closely with the opioid Taskforce throughout the summer and with guidance from the WMS opioid working group committed to supporting the Taskforce legislation proposals in the 2019 Session.



WYOMING MEDICAL SOCIETY

Advocating for doctors since 1903