

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



Healthcare Silver Bullet Search Continues

Legislators serving in Wyoming's House and Senate are hearing the message from their constituents that they have to fix healthcare in Wyoming. Frustration with high priced insurance plans, surprise billing, lack of transparency in health services, and barriers to getting the medications they need are plaguing families across our state. Pressure on our elected officials is mounting and they're committed to giving Wyoming patients a solution.

Unfortunately for the patients of Wyoming, **members of the House and Senate are buying into a notion that dramatically expanding scope of practice for non-physician providers will be the silver bullet they've been looking for.** Senate President Drew Perkins (R - Casper) said in floor debate last week that, "it's time for us to embrace the overlap [in healthcare professions] so we can have expanded access to medical care by extending practice acts of all providers without ever having to recruit another person to Wyoming."



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.

WMS was lucky to have our President, Lisa Finkelstein, DO, at the capitol all week with us. Her presence and ability to build relationships and interact with so many legislators was invaluable. Big thanks to Dr. Finkelstein for the sacrifices she made this week to be with us in Cheyenne.

Lynn Horton was Doc of the Day Friday, 1/18/19 Thank you, Dr. Horton.

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>

Great opportunity exists for medicine to educate our policy makers about the impact that inappropriate scope expansions have on increasing healthcare costs, unnecessary and duplicative testing, misdiagnoses and delayed treatments that all serve to harm patient care. WMS has stressed our interest in

being part of conversations regarding expanding scope recognizing that there are areas in which improvements could and should be made. Expansion of scope can benefit care for patients in our state, however, quoting U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, State Representative Joe MacGuire (R-Casper), said in the House on another issue last week, “good policy happens incrementally” and Wyoming needs to take a deep breath before charging forward to ensure we are thoughtfully and carefully approaching these decisions.

This Year's Scope Battle in Depth:

Optometry continues their pursuit to move into surgery with [Senate File 55](#) dominating the healthcare debate in the State Senate this week.

After the legislative proposal found the support it needed in committee with a 4-1 favorable vote, it moved to the Senate floor for debate. The Wyoming Ophthalmological Society (WOS) distributed a [statewide voter poll](#) conducted by Magellan Strategies demonstrating strong opposition from Wyoming voters to anyone but a physician performing surgery. While it's frustrating to see that the voices of the physician experts, and now the voices of Wyoming patients, are being ignored in the Senate, we aren't giving up hope. WMS and WOS continue working in partnership with our friends of medicine in the Senate and will keep members up to date for ways physicians can come together to move the needle in educating policy makers about ways they can improve access without jeopardizing patient care or increasing healthcare costs.

Physical Therapy found success in the House of Representatives this week with their ask in [House Bill 006](#) to remove language in current state law requiring physician collaboration and consulting after 12 visits or 30 days, whichever occurs first. WMS and the Wyoming Physical Therapy Association negotiated compromise in Spring of 2018 resulting in WMS' commitment to support and champion their effort to achieve unrestricted direct access in exchange for their commitment to move their members away from medical diagnostic testing, specifically electrodiagnostic testing (EDX) with needle EMG and nerve conduction studies (NCS). After WMS testified in support of PT in legislative hearings throughout the interim, PT shifted position and testified to the appropriateness of physical therapy conducting EDX. An overwhelming number of members in the House of Representatives recognized the issue and offered support to WMS in resolving the problem with floor amendments. Thank you, to our friends in the House who understand the issue, recognize the history and expressed a

willingness to come fight for the safety of Wyoming patients.

Other Scope Debates on the Horizon:

Medicaid payment for Midwife services - A proposal to authorize Medicaid funds to pay for certified lay midwives and nurse midwives for home births moved through the House this week with great momentum.

Naturopath Licensure - Naturopaths are back again this year requesting licensure. The bill defines naturopathic practice as clinical and laboratory diagnostic testing, nutritional medicine, botanical medicine, public health measures, hygiene, counseling, minor surgery, homeopathy, acupuncture, prescription medicine, intravenous and injection therapy, naturopathic obstetrics and naturopathic physical medicine including naturopathic manipulative therapy. The bill has been introduced and referred to the House Labor Committee chaired by Sue Wilson (R-Cheyenne).

WMS Cares About More than Just Scope and Weighs In

Children Win in the Senate:

Evanston Senator Wendy Schuler successfully carried [Senate File 60 - Protection of children-child endangerment amendments](#) in the Senate last week. Although significantly amended, the bill seeks to protect siblings and other children living in the same home as a child who is the confirmed victim of abuse. SF60 allows for a 48-hour period in which thorough examination can be done on a child vulnerable or at risk for violence and abuse. The bill heads to the House for debate in the second chamber. WMS will be there in partnership with the WY-AAP and WAFP to support the bill's passage.

Other Bills of Interest last week:

Air ambulance - Two separate bills regarding air ambulance regulation and rates were considered in the House Labor, Health and Social Services Committee last week. [House Bill 0035 - Worker's compensation-air ambulances](#) and [House Bill 0194 - Air ambulance coverage](#) - Medicaid, aim to address growing concerns regarding air ambulance service in Wyoming.

Repeal - hospital records and information statutes seeks to repeal W.S. 35-2-605 through 35-2-617 to avoid current contradiction and complication caused by state statute overlap with federal HIPAA regulations. WMS supports this initiative brought forward by the Wyoming Hospital Association (WHA) but is working with WHA to ensure that sections within W.S. 35-2-609 (a) which pertains to confidentiality and ability for peer review processes within hospitals. Big thanks to WHA for their understanding of the issue and commitment to finding resolution in collaboration with WMS.

Hemp - [HBo100 - Use of hemp extracts](#) and [HBo171 - Hemp and cannabidiol regulation](#) are up for debate in the House. HB-0100 seeks to remove need for neurology prescription for hemp oil. WMS supports the deregulation in light of removing medicine and our physicians as gatekeepers in the bill. The bill stalled in House committee with a 4-4 tie vote and 1 member excused. Sponsors of the bill are working to get the bill heard again to include the vote of the chairman.