

# 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

**Status:**

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The WY Legislature is 13 days into the 2019 Session with 22 remaining. This year's General Session is scheduled to last 35 days in order to extend the 2020 Budget Session to 25 days.

Deadline to submit Senate Files to the Legislative Service Office (LSO) was last Thursday, the 24th. House Bills have to be filed with LSO by this Tuesday, the 29th.



## More Than Just Healthcare

While it seemed that healthcare debate dominated much of the first two weeks, the third week shifted focus to a variety of other issues. Discussions ranging from change in political party affiliation and election regulations to gun free zones and taxes held the legislature's attention. The House had some heated debate regarding promoting gender wage equality before ultimately passing the bill with 39 of 60 votes in favor. Mental health professionals engaged in their own scope battles with bill debate around training and education requirements. The University of Wyoming and the state's community colleges also got their first taste of how ugly legislative fights about scope can get with the legislature giving the initial green light for community colleges to start competing for student enrollment by offering four-year bachelor degrees.

### Supplemental Budget Released

The [2019-2020 supplemental budget](#) posted Friday night. Funding proposals of most interest to healthcare include:

- \$10M - reimbursement for developmental disability home



## WMS Doc of the Day

Thank you to our volunteers who serve the Wyoming Legislature and staff during the session.

- Steven Beer, MD
- Doug Parks, MD
- Jake Behringer, MD

## Health Cmte Debates:

Health topics debated last week in Committee and their outcomes include:

- Hospital Cost Study - Passed
- Mental Health Professions - Passed
- State Reinsurance Program - Passed
- Death Penalty Repeal - Passed
- Mental Health Professions practice act amendments - passed
- Healthcare innovation - passed
- PBM cost notification - passed
- Gunshot and stab wound reporting - passed

and community based waivers

- \$210K - expansion of the medication donation program
- \$8M - Community Grants. \$6M of which shall be dedicated to grants to counties for prevention of use and misuse or abuse of tobacco, alcohol or controlled substances and \$2M in grant funding for activities designed to prevent suicide
- \$25K - advisory council on palliative care
- \$320K - volunteer multi-payer claims database with a required report identifying potential cost savings and recommendations for improved efficiency and savings
- \$749K - breast and cervical cancer treatment program
- \$450K - Wyoming home health services, senior services and the aging and disability resource center

## Scope of Practice Conversations Continue

**Optometry:** The Senate concluded their final debate on whether or not Wyoming should join three other states in the country to allow optometrists to move into advanced and surgical eye procedures Tuesday. The bill passed on general file without debate with the final vote count at 22 aye and 7 no. and 1 excused. Senators have been convinced that expanding scope of practice will serve to increase access to care while simultaneously reducing costs to patients. WMS is working diligently to educate and explain that quite the opposite is true and that reducing the standard of care is in no way an answer to Wyoming's physician shortage challenges. President Finkelstein, DO, will be asking members to do their part in writing an email or calling their legislator to help WMS educate our lawmakers on these important issues. Thank you to those who have already used our Voter Voice tool.

**Associate Physicians:** [House Bill 262](#) sponsored by Gillette physician, Representative Tim Hallinan, MD, posted late last week. The bill proposes to create a new license type administered by the board of medicine for physicians who have graduated from medical school and passed parts one and two of the USMLE but have failed to match to a residency program. It authorizes restricted licenses to



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deliver primary care services under the direct supervision of a physician for one-year with opportunity to only renew the one-year license three times.

## Up Next Week:

The coming week will kick-off early Monday morning with debate on increasing **tax on tobacco**. House Revenue will hear House Bill 218 which, among other things, proposes to raise the tax on cigarettes by a full \$1.00. The American Cancer Association - Cancer Action Network (ACS-CAN) holds a hard line that any tobacco tax increase must be at least a dollar to bring meaningful impact to prevention. WMS supports the tax increase both for the power in deterring future users from choosing tobacco products but also for the potential to raise state dollars that can be dedicated to Medicaid to pay for tobacco-related diseases and conditions among its covered patient population.

House LHSS will take up [House Bill 211 - Mental health and substance use coverage parity](#) and Senate LHSS will tackle [Senate File 146 - Medicaid expansion study](#) and [Senate File 144 - Medicaid and SNAP eligibility requirements](#).

Friday, February 1, is the last day for bills to be reported out of Committee in the house of origin meaning that if a bill has failed to have been heard in the committee to which it was assigned in the first chamber it fails to move forward in the 2019 process.

The following house bills must be reported out of committee by this Friday or they fail on timing provisions:

- HB 103 - Reporting of abortions
- HB 123 - Naturopathy licensing board
- HB 176 - Tobacco settlement funds research standards
- HB 234 - Marihuana reform
- HB 244 - Medicaid work requirements and expansion
- HB 249 - Psychiatric step down and coordination services - children
- HB 262 - Associate Physicians - Restricted license

The following senate files must be reported out of committee by this Friday or they also fail on timing:

- SF 128 - Unborn victims of violence
- SF 133 - Health care access
- SF 144 - Medicaid and SNAP eligibility requirements
- SF 146 - Medicaid expansion study
- SF 156 - Medical digital innovation sandbox