

ADVOCACY

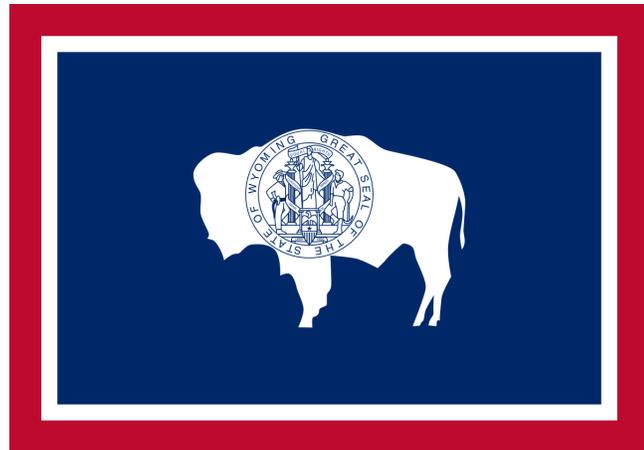
Advocating for Wyoming Doctors and their Patients Since 1903

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 23 days into the 2019 Session with 12 remaining. This year's General Session is scheduled to last 35 days in order to extend the 2020 Budget Session to 25 days.

Deadline for bills to be reported out of Committee in the second chamber is February 20.



Scope of Practice Debate Lingers

The House Labor, Health and Social Services Committee will hear Senate File 55 - Optometry Scope Expansion, **tomorrow upon adjournment**. WMS continues to support ophthalmology in their efforts to bring clarity to the issue for legislators while ensuring that our position is never in any way misinterpreted to be one of disrespect or condescension toward optometry.

Wyoming optometrists are fortunate to practice in a state that currently so artfully defines optometry in statute. W.S. 33-23-101 (b) defines optometry as, “the employment of any means other than the use of therapeutic lasers or surgery for diagnosing and treating ocular pathology and for the measurement of the powers or range of human vision or the determination of the accommodative and refractive status of the human eye or the scope of its functions in general or the adaptation of lenses or frames for the aid thereof.” Given this broad definition, optometrists are granted broad authority to care for Wyoming patients to the height of their training without jeopardizing patient safety by entering into the laser and scalpel surgical space.

The Wyoming Ophthalmological Society (WOS) and WMS are proud of our efforts to seek compromise with optometry throughout the process. Although unsuccessful, we hope our members and your patients will also



WMS Doc of the Day

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

- Evan Norby, MD
- John Healey, MD
- Dustin Durham, MD
- Lynn Horton, MD

Failed Initiatives:

The following legislative proposals have failed the 2019 process:

- HB 35** - Worker's compensation air ambulances
- HB 87** - Damages evidence of health care costs
- HB 100** - Use of hemp extracts
- HB 123** - Naturopathy licensing
- HB 218** - Tobacco Tax
- HB 234** - Marijuana reform
- HB 244** - Medicaid - work requirements and expansion
- HB249** - Psychiatric step down and coordination services - children
- HB262** - Associate Physicians
- HB278** - Medical cannabis act
- HB287** - Prescription drugs
- HB292** - WY health care pricing transparency Act
- HB296** - Cigarette tax
- HB302** - Abortion - penalty for failure to inform
- SF56** - Mental health professions
- SF82** - DNR Directives
- SF128** - Unborn victims of violence
- SF133** - Health care access

be proud of the fact that we navigated this space with respect for optometry and ongoing efforts to help update their practice act with respect to pharmaceutical expansion and updates to the board composition of the board of optometric examiners.

Ultimately, regardless of the outcome of debate this week on SF 55 and others, the most important thing is that all providers within the Wyoming healthcare team can work collaboratively together to do the right thing for patients. Thank you to all of our members who have crafted thoughtful messages to our legislators about this important issue and thank you for representing the physician profession so honorably by offering your genuine respect and appreciation for what your optometry colleagues contribute to Wyoming healthcare while offering your insights and perspectives on the importance of patient safety in our rural state.

Medicaid

Several Medicaid-related bills continue to move through the process this year. WMS was disappointed that the Medicaid expansion bill died, but is pleased that the legislature continues to want to discuss the merits of the proposal. Although we don't necessarily believe that more study is necessary to know whether or not Wyoming patients and providers would be positively impacted by expansion, at least studying expansion keeps the conversation alive and active.

A bill to require community engagement through school, work or volunteering in order to maintain eligibility for Medicaid and SNAP seems to have stalled at the desk of the House Speaker. However, a bill to authorize state Medicaid to reimburse certified lay midwives for home births continues to gain support and traction.

Child Protections Bill Moves Forward

Senate File 60 - Protection of Children - Child Endangerment Amendments passed the House Judiciary Committee late Thursday night with the help of Wyoming Academy of Pediatrics Vice President Andrew Rose, MD, and the Child Advocacy Project. This bill seeks to strengthen protections for children in authorizing sibling at risk exams in circumstances where another child residing in the home is the confirmed victim of abuse. A big thanks is due to Wyoming pediatricians and the Wyoming Academy of Family Physicians for their help and support in moving this effort forward this year.



WYOMING
MEDICAL
SOCIETY

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