

ADVOCACY

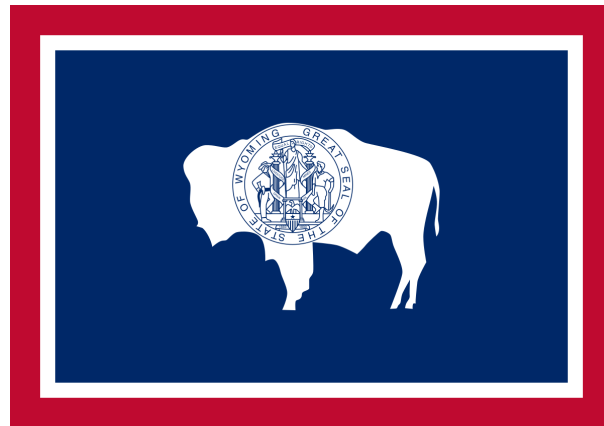
Advocating for Wyoming Doctors and their Patients Since 1903

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 28 days into the 2019 Session with 7 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 This Wednesday, February 20.



Patient Safety Protected

Several bills drafted for consideration in the 2019 session sought to change licensure of healthcare professions, in various ways, and all would have, or will, impact patient safety and care in Wyoming. The Wyoming Medical Society has long fought for the highest standards of care when it comes to healthcare delivery in the Cowboy State, knowing that our opponents often mischaracterize our efforts as nothing more than “protecting turf.” WMS will continue representing the physician voice with integrity and accuracy, depending on key legislators who understand the complexity and sensitivity of these tough issues.

Optometry Expansion: After a long eight months of debating the appropriateness of optometrists moving into a surgical space, **Senate File 55 was defeated Monday** in the House Labor, Health, and Social Services Committee. Four hours of testimony and debate ultimately ended in a 5-4 vote. Wyoming joins a growing list of states who have rejected optometry’s proposal to gain legislative authority to access therapeutic lasers and advanced scalpel procedures. The optometry lobby worked throughout the week to garner votes to support a recall motion which would have pulled the failed bill from committee to the House floor. The motion was not made this past week, but can still be attempted next week. We are hopeful that the legislature will honor process and not jeopardize the institution by ignoring the committee’s work, time and decisions.



WMS Doc of the Day

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

- Greg McCue, MD
- Evan Norby, MD
- Kimberly Broomfield, MD
- Lynn Horton, MD

What Else Happened This Week?

The following health-related legislative proposals were vetted this past week in committee:

- HB 63** - Pharmacy benefit managers-Rx cost notification
- HB 109** - Advanced psychiatric nurse practitioner program-amendment
- HB 103** - Reporting of abortions
- HB 194** - Air ambulance coverage - Medicaid
- HB 211** - Mental health and substance use coverage parity
- SF 45** - Emergency administration of opiate antagonist revisions
- SF 46** - Opioid Rx Limits
- SF 47** - Controlled substances education and administration
- SF 67** - Hospital cost study
- SF 85** - WY Medicaid Fraud Control Act
- SF 150** - Health care innovation
- SF 156** - Medical digital innovation sandbox

Work Requirements in Medicaid

Medicaid Expansion made its way back into conversations this week when the House Labor, Health and Social Services Committee debated **Senate File 144, a proposal to place work requirements on individuals who currently qualify for Medicaid.** Proponents of the bill testified that it was cruel for a state to not place appropriate incentives on individuals to work and strive to better themselves. They contended that the threat of discontinuing health benefits if eligible recipients didn't engage in community activities, be it education, work or volunteering, would be the right motivator. Opponents of the bill testified that a large percentage of the population impacted by this work requirement are at 56% of the federal poverty level which calculates to \$14,000 annually for a family of four. The American Cancer Society - Cancer Action Network (ACS-CAN) testified that this bill, along with its drafted 12 month lock out period for anyone failing to meet the requirements, stood to significantly harm patients undergoing cancer treatments currently covered by state Medicaid. Medicaid Expansion ended up a focus, yet again, given that the Federal Government has only approved these work requirement waivers in states that have expanded Medicaid and not yet to any state having resisted the expansion of those medical benefits. After thoughtful debate and consideration, the bill passed out of committee on a 5-4 vote. WMS did not weigh-in on the bill as the Board of Trustees has not yet taken a position on work requirements within Medicaid.

Child Protections Bill Still in Play

Senate File 60 - Protection of Children - Child Endangerment Amendments passed first and second reading in the House this past week. It will stand its last test Tuesday on third reading and, if successful, will then go to conference committee given the differences in the House version of the bill from the way it looked leaving the Senate earlier in the session. The WY-AAP, WAFP, WMS and a myriad of other child advocacy groups continue to work to see ultimate passage of the bill and are cautiously optimistic about its future.



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