

ADVOCACY

Advocating for Wyoming Doctors and their Patients Since 1903

February 10-14, 2020 ~ Week One Update

What a Week...

The 65th Legislature kicked-off with Governor Gordon delivering his second State of the State address on Monday. While the Governor has before articulated his visions for Wyoming healthcare, this year's State of the State was focused on emphasizing the strength of the state, bright spots in our economy and his successes from his first year in office. To view a copy of the Governor's prepared comments [CLICK HERE](#)

Historically, Budget Sessions have lasted 20 days but last year the Legislative Management Council changed the schedule by reducing the General Session from 40 to 35 days and thus increasing the Budget Session from 20 days to 24 days. The primary purpose of the Budget Session is funding state government for the biennium which explains the higher 2/3 vote threshold for introducing other, non-budget related, bills.



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The WMS Voice in Health Policy will be active as ever this year and we will keep our members up to speed with our **Legislative Bill Tracker** and weekly updates. The deadline for submitting 2020 legislative proposals to the state Legislative Services Office (LSO) was Wednesday, February 12. All told, we saw **398 bills and resolutions filed** and posted for consideration during this year's short 24 day Session. WMS leadership gave guidance for our advocacy team to support, oppose or closely monitor **42 of the nearly 400 proposals. Only 25 of those 42 bills remain viable** after this busy first week of debate and deliberation. WMS either witnessed or played key roles in 17 of the original 42 bills of interest being defeated.

WMS Doc and PA 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.

- **Matt Mitchell, MD**
- **Evan Norby, DO**
- **Kristy Van Kirk, MD**
- **Jory Wasserburger, MD**
- **Carol Wright-Becker, MD**



Proud father, Senator Jeff Wasserburger, introduced his son, WWAMI graduate **Jory Wasserburger, MD**, and daughter **Hayley Anderson, RN**, as the opening day Doc and Nurse of the Day.



CRMC emergency medicine physician and WWAMI graduate, **Carol Wright-Becker, MD**, receives a deserved standing ovation from the House floor for her heroic actions in taking care of a medical emergency in the House gallery. [Watch the Video](#) to hear the story of how she made a difference this week!

Volunteer for Doc or PA of the Day

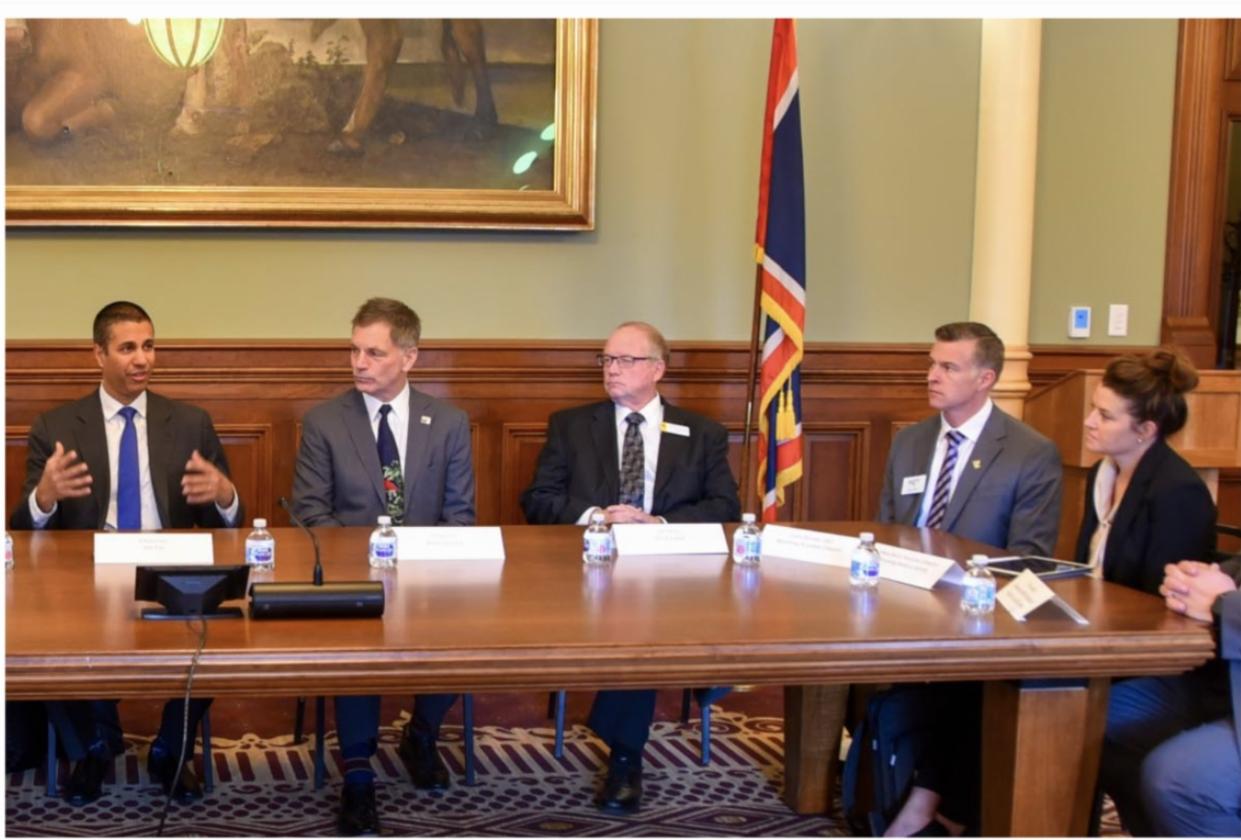
We still have a few days open. Don't miss the opportunity to be a part of this unique and amazing experience. Contact WMS Communications Director, Whitney Harmon, at whitney@wyomed.org, or [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more and pick your day!

Scope of Practice Dominates First Week Advocacy

The week saw five bills relating to healthcare profession licensing come and go. A bill to license **naturopaths** was withdrawn by the sponsor, a proposal to authorize Wyoming **pharmacists to prescribe and administer contraceptives** failed to receive the necessary votes to be introduced, and a Wyoming Association of Anesthesiologists-backed bill to create a new license type for **anesthesiologist assistants** failed to gain enough support to advance through the process.

The big news in scope of practice conversations this week was **optometry** making another push toward expanding their scope of practice. [Senate File 29](#), sponsored by Kemmerer Senator Fred Baldwin, PA-C, failed to receive the necessary 20 votes for introduction. The bill failing so early in the process allowed opportunity to bring a mirror proposal in the Chamber across the hall. Wednesday brought a surprise with [House Bill 241](#) posting for consideration in the House Chamber. WMS and the Wyoming Ophthalmological Society (WOS) worked hard to argue that Wyoming patients deserved for optometry and ophthalmology to resolve their disagreements independent from the politics of a rushed budget session and successfully convinced Senate and House members that a formal mediation process would serve everyone well.

In the end, WMS is most interested in protecting patient safety and believes that one of the key factors in that safety is maintaining healthy relationships between all members of the healthcare team. We are hopeful that the defeat of both optometry expansion proposals this year will allow everyone the opportunity to take a deep breath and pursue a negotiation space with open minds. We are proud of how we represented our members and optimistic about the next steps.



Federal Communications Commission Chair, Ajit Pai, visits WY.

WMS Executive Director Sheila Bush enjoyed a welcome break from the Capitol debate to join Governor Gordon and a host of other state legislators and industry leaders to discuss statewide connectivity and efforts the FCC is making to bridge the digital gap in industries like healthcare. Director Bush was privileged to get to talk about the work **WMS President, David B. Wheeler, MD, PhD**, is accomplishing in TeleStroke in Wyoming and emphasize the importance that reliable connectivity plays in allowing emerging technologies to advance **healthcare innovations and telemedicine** across the state.

What to Expect Next

State Budget Debate Starts Monday, February 17.

The Legislature will kick off budget debate next week with the House budget explanations on Monday and Tuesday. Wednesday will hear the 2nd reading of the budget meaning that all budget amendments will be due by 5:00 pm on Tuesday.

WMS will be advocating to protect **enhanced reimbursement for CHIP** as the budget moves through the process. Thank you to our pediatrician members who have helped us get detailed information to support our efforts on this front.

How To Connect and Stay Engaged

Use wyoleg.gov to learn more about this year's legislative process. Below are quick links to important information.

[Daily Calendars](#) including floor calendars, audio streams, and committee schedules

[Bill Listing](#) that includes all legislative proposals posted for the 2020 Session

As always, Executive Director Sheila Bush welcomes and invites any and all communication. If you have questions about the status of a bill, want to provide feedback or input on legislation, or want to share your thoughts on any other aspect of the WMS advocacy work, please email her at sheila@wyomed.org or call her cell phone at 307-630-8602.



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