

# ADVOCACY

Advocating for Wyoming Doctors and their Patients Since 1903

## March 2-6, 2020 ~ Week Four Update

### Budget Deal Brokered At The Last Minute

Late Friday night the House and Senate came to terms with one another on a budget deal to send to the Governor. General agreement was achieved fairly early spare about a dozen items that stalled the process, including \$2.5 million in matching funds to UW for the law school, the deletion of health insurance coverage for a number of currently unfilled positions in the state's education system and differing opinions on \$19.2 million to cover cost adjustments in K-12 education funding. After heavy negotiations and concessions from both sides, the budget will go to Governor Gordon Monday morning. He will have until 11:59 PM on Thursday, March 12, to issue any vetoes to the Legislature's changes. The Legislature can then override the Governor's vetoes with a 2/3 vote if they so choose.

As for policy debates outside the budget, the role for WMS advocates has all but come to a close. After engaging with over 40 bill proposals this Session, only a handful remain active. The legislative bill tracker looks different this week as it has been reorganized to more clearly show what bills successfully completed the process, what bills failed and which bills remain active in the process heading into this final week. Of the 42 bills we monitored and lobbied separate from the two budget bills, six remain in debate, ten have been signed by at least one chamber and are headed to the Governor for final approval, and 26 failed to survive the 2020 legislative process.



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**The WMS Voice in Health Policy** will close out another legislative session having fostered positive new relationships while improving upon existing ones. Our presence both inside the Capitol and across the state with phone calls and emails from our members to

legislators did not go unnoticed. Health care policy is not absent high emotion and controversy. Legislators welcome the WMS voice in hard conversations because we help educate on the impacts of what legislative proposals on healthcare delivery across the state without getting wrapped up in the anecdotal and emotional aspects of bills. The legislature looks to WMS for the reasoned and stable approach our organization has historically taken on important issues that shape healthcare in Wyoming and our advocates are prouder than ever to carry your voice to the best of our ability.

Stay up to date with us using our **Legislative Bill Tracker**. As mentioned above, it looks a little different this week as we near the close of the Session. The reorganized tracker allows everyone to see a clear snapshot of what remains in process, what succeeded and what ultimately failed.

WMS Legislative Bill Tracker

## 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.

- Julie Whitesell, PA-C
- Paul Washburn, MD



## 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](mailto:whitney@wyomed.org), or [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more and pick your day!

## Who We Elect Matters

The fourth week was another typical week in the Capitol with its share of ups and downs. The big initiative for WMS this year with aiming to relieve our members of burdensome PDMP requirements passed Third Reading in the Senate with only one vote opposing the bill. The passage of House Bill 85 represented a huge win for medicine and demonstrated the power of WMS and our members when we coalesce around a goal.

We contrasted that big win with disappointment in the House Judiciary Committee

when several physicians and WMS testified on Senate File 97 - Infant Born Alive. WMS did our best to educate lawmakers of the confusion and unintended consequences this unnecessary legislation served to create in healthcare delivery separate and apart from the controversial and sensitive issue of abortion. We worked to help legislators understand that while they came at the issue with a focus on elective procedures, the policy impact would potentially have more detrimental impact within the space of care for complicated pregnancies with lethal fetal abnormalities. Despite various attempts by WMS and our members, we failed in our attempts to shift the conversation away from hypothetical horror stories about physicians placing healthy infants in closets to die, one of the more alarming testimonies from the proponents of the bill, and toward the very real clinical world of caring for tragic health events with pregnant women and their families.

The logic and power of an argument is only as good as the people listening. If any member has ever questioned the value of the Wyoming Medical Political Action Committee (WYOPAC) this week serves as great example of how much it can mean. WMS is well respected for our voice within Wyoming's policy space advocating for healthcare and medicine. But, what's even more important than our efforts in the Capitol, is what happens in each district across the state on election years. 2020 is an election year in Wyoming with every member of the House of Representatives, and half of the Senate, up for election at home. WYOPAC will be working to grow our PAC so we can positively influence election campaigns across the state. Electing thoughtful leaders who are willing to listen, be educated, and see an issue from varying perspectives is of utmost importance in our state. WYOPAC can play a meaningful role in ensuring a high calibre of individual is elected to serve and we need your help to make that happen.

### **Committee Work During Week Four**

[HB 85](#) - Prescription Tracking Program Requirements **Passed Senate Health (5-0)**

[HB 113](#)- Importation of Rx drugs study **Passed Senate Health (5-0)**

[SF 91](#) - Global signature authority for health providers **Passed House Health (9-0)**

[SF 69](#) - Rural health care district authority **Passed House Ag (8-1)**

[HB 232](#)- Organ donations - state employee leave **Passed Senate Health (5-0)**

[SF 97](#) - Infant Born Alive **Passed House Judiciary (6-3)**

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## Maine Voters Showed Up For Kids This Week

Maine voters achieved a significant victory for children this past week. Admittedly, not a Wyoming update, this important vote is noteworthy enough to include here as it sets great precedent for the rest of our states. A ballot initiative that would have overturned a law limiting non-medical vaccine exemptions was resoundingly rejected. This was the first time in modern history that this issue was taken up statewide, and sends a strong message nationwide about voters' support for vaccines.

## What to Expect Next

The 2020 legislative session is officially winding down. With only four official days left on the calendar, the legislature will debate the remaining bills in each Chamber and eagerly await the Governor's vetoes. Monday will be the last day for bills to be heard on general file in the second chamber meaning that bills that fail to be heard will not move forward in this year's process.

Committee work is finished spare conversations in each committee about interim committee work. As soon as this session wraps up, the work of deciding interim topics begins with each committee taking recommendations from the public and other lawmakers, deciding together what is of highest priority, and then making their case to legislative Management Council for permission to include those topics in their interim topic menu.

The Wyoming Medical Society, Wyoming Hospital Association and Wyoming representatives from the American Heart Association worked together to submit requests for the Committee to consider telehealth among their interim topics. Our organizations will partner together to make our case to the Joint Labor, Health and

## How To Connect and Stay Engaged

Use [wyoleg.gov](http://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](mailto:sheila@wyomed.org) or call her cell phone at 307-630-8602.



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