

ADVOCACY

Advocating for Wyoming Doctors and their Patients Since 1903

Bills of interest to the Wyoming Medical Society were discussed by the Board of Trustees and positions for important legislative proposals were decided. Those bills of interest to WMS members are tracked on a spreadsheet and regularly updated. To access the spreadsheet, [CLICK HERE](#). Any member is welcome to request that WMS reconsider a position on an issue, or take another issue under review

The Schedule:

Session Convenes - Virtual

Tuesday, Jan. 12

Standing Cmts Meet - Virtual

Tuesday-Thursday, Jan. 19-21

Virtual Session Reconvenes

Wednesday, Jan 27 (8 days)

Virtual Session Adjourns

Friday, February 5

Full Schedule [HERE](#)



WYOMING
MEDICAL
SOCIETY

What a Week...

The 66th Legislature kicked-off with Governor Gordon delivering his third State of the State address on Tuesday, January 12. The address looked a lot different this year with it being delivered virtually. The Governor emphasized the need for Wyoming to live within its means, defend its energy industry and revitalize education. The Governor offered special recognition and offered the state's "unbounding admiration and everlasting gratitude to our doctors, nurses, and other frontline healthcare workers."

Governor Gordon spoke of the state's budget as our primary concern given the fiscal storm Wyoming finds itself in right now. Wyoming has experienced deeper cuts than ever taken under any other governor and without meaningful conversations around revenue diversification and generation, more cuts are likely to come.

Constitutionally, Wyoming's Governor is obligated to balance the budget but has no authority over revenue generation meaning his only option in complying with the state's Constitution is to cut his way to a balanced budget. Wyoming is looking to the legislature now, the entity that does have authority to generate revenue, for solutions to our economic woes. To see the Governor's recorded speech [CLICK HERE](#).

The WMS Voice in Health Policy will be active again this year working to ensure our members' perspectives are included in critical policy conversations. WMS will keep our members up to speed with our

Action on Bills:

- **SF11-Highway safety-seat belts** Passed Committee 3-1
- **SF30-Pandemic response review task force** Laid back for debate at a later time at the Chairman's discretion.
- **SF51-Community health center and rural health clinic assistance.** Failed Committee
- **SF52-Insurance-mental health and substance use parity.** Not heard due to lack of time.
- **SF53-Ground ambulance service provider assessment act** Passed Committee 4-1
- **SF54-Statewide HIE codification.** Passed Committee 5-0
- **HB62-Suicide prevention** Passed Committee

How To Connect:

The Wyoming Legislature makes following the bills and actions taken by the House and Senate easier than ever. Visit www.wyoleg.gov for schedules, bill postings, information about legislators and ways to contact your local legislator.

legislative tracking sheet and weekly updates. The deadline for submitting 2021 Senate Files to the state Legislative Services Office (LSO) is Wednesday, March 3, and Monday, March 8, for House Bills. Currently, more than 140 legislative proposals have been posted to the legislative website. Of those 140, WMS has flagged more than 20 that could impact healthcare delivery or patient health in our state. We are confident that more are to come.

Bills of Interest this week spanned a broad range of interest areas from debates in healthcare profession licensing and seat belt law changes to immunity protections during a public health emergency.

Three days of virtual committee debate saw fourteen bills of interest to WMS. Two bills, (**HB59** and **SF19**) aimed to amend the state's **immunity** provisions afforded during public health emergencies, accounted for the largest investment of WMS time this week. Both the House Travel, Recreation, Wildlife & Cultural Resources Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee did their best to respond to a request from Wyoming's business community to expand current statutory immunity language originally written to protect healthcare providers to include them. In the attempts to broaden language to protect businesses, healthcare was unintentionally harmed by rolling back key provisions set out to hold them harmless in treating patients inside a declared health emergency. Both committees worked hard to amend the flawed bills, which WMS deeply appreciates, but more work is yet to be done to ensure that healthcare protections remain unchanged.

The Senate Revenue Committee soundly rejected a proposal to enact a **tax exemption for feminine hygiene products** and diapers while House Revenue Committee members voted to support a **tobacco tax increase**. The House Labor, Health and Social Services Committee dedicated their committee work to addressing mental health. The Committee passed HB 0003, **Certified addictions practitioners-certification amendments**, as well as HB0004, **Mental health professions practice act-amendments**. The Committee ran out of time to debate HB0038, **Community behavioral health-priority populations**, which constitutes a fairly robust overhaul of the community mental health system in Wyoming. WMS is uncertain what the future of that bill will be, but are confident the Committee will find a way to revisit the discussion in the coming week.