

ADVOCACY

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February 21-February 25, 2022 ~ Session Update

Digging Into the Numbers

The House and Senate prioritized focus on the 2023-2024 biennium state budget. The Senate debated over 60 amendments on their version of the budget bill ([Senate File 1](#)) while the House did the same with over 100 amendments on their mirror of the bill ([House Bill 1](#)). The initial proposal resulting from the Governor's recommendations and final Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC) decisions totaled \$2,768,696,368 in general fund appropriations, \$1,882,698,495 in anticipated federal funds, and another \$585,586,918 in special revenue funds. Along with various other funds included, this budget uniquely includes \$658,472,058 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fund appropriations.

Department of Health (WDH) constitutes 28% of the total general fund budget and totals just shy of \$2 Billion when including federal funds. Unlike many other state agency budgets, 90% of the WDH budget funds direct services to the people of Wyoming. In this year's budget, the legislature proposed to restore many of the cuts taken in step 2 and step 3 reductions taken in recent budget cuts.

Of special note, there are several budget footnotes one of which appropriates \$15 Million to mental health and substance abuse services. Budget footnote 4 allocates \$7.5 Million of tobacco settlement funds to substance abuse programs to be made available immediately.

WWAMI - Medical Education is included in the University of Wyoming (UW) budget. UW accounts for just under 8% of the state's general fund expenditures in contrast to WDH at 28%. The state legislature is appropriating almost \$16.3 million in general funds in the 23-24 biennium for support of the program's operations. Additionally, the legislature restored funding to cover the Univ. of WA tuition increases that were not included in the previous biennium budget. Another nearly \$1.6 Million is included in this year's biennium budget to cover unfunded increases in student tuition and fees.

Although the House and Senate started the week with identical budget bills to debate, they each closed out the week having passed very different budget bills as a

result of different amendments adopted in each chamber. Next week we will see a Joint Conference Committee appointed by House and Senate leadership to reconcile differences in the bills.

WMS Legislative Bill Tracker



WMS Members Step Forward

An impressive list of WMS members got intimately involved with the legislative process this week. WMS successfully influenced a number of bills more significantly than we would have otherwise been able to thanks to the involvement, guidance, and testimony from these fine physicians. We can't thank them enough for the efforts and the impact they made on Wyoming health policy this week!

Jeff Storey, MD

Rene Hinkle, MD

Giovannina Anthony, MD

Rachelle Bond, DO

Kathryn Noyes, MD



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Session Schedule & Coming Deadlines

This week, bills had to be passed out of their assigned committee by Thursday, 2/24. Any bill moving forward this session had to be passed in Committee of the Whole by Friday, 2/25 by rule. However, it's our understanding that the Senate intends to suspend the rules in order to hear bills waiting on general file (AKA Committee of the Whole) this coming Monday.

WMS Doc & PA of the Day

Thank you to our WMS members for volunteering to serve as Doc and PA of the Day. This week, the legislature appreciated the following WMS volunteers:

Matt Mitchell, MD
Tom Radosevich, MD



There are still days available to volunteer for Doc or PA of the Day. WMS is proud of this program which provides a great opportunity for WMS members to provide a valuable service to the legislature and have a front-row seat to the legislative process. Click below to learn more and see what days remain open. Email info@wyomed.org if you're interested in spending a day at the Capitol with us!

Information about Doc and PA of the Day

Bills Failing To Date

Several of the bills being monitored by WMS reached the end of their journey in the process this past week. Those bills are as follows:

1. [Medical treatment opportunity act](#) - A bill to authorize the Governor and Dept. of Health to negotiate Medicaid Expansion **FAILED** to be introduced in the House. *WMS Supported*
2. [Vaccine requirements limitations](#) - A bill to limit vaccination requirements, interfere with private business practice, and set a 5-year moratorium on new childhood vaccinations **FAILED** in the House Labor, Health and Social Services Committee. *WMS Opposed*
3. [Contracts in restraint of trade](#) - A bill prohibiting restraint of trade language in contracts, effectively abolishing non-compete clauses **FAILED** in the House (42-17).
4. [Broadband and telehealth access projects](#) - A bill to appropriate \$7 million in ARPA funds to support grants in support of broadband and telehealth access **FAILED** to be introduced in the House. *WMS Supported*
5. [Decriminalization of cannabis](#) - A bill to decriminalize the use and possession of cannabis, as well as remove restrictions on prescribing cannabis **FAILED** to be introduced in the House.

6. [Prohibiting mask discrimination for COVID-19](#) - A bill to prohibit discrimination based on the use or non-use of a mask, including advertising the use of facial coverings as a condition of receiving or accessing benefits **FAILED** to be introduced in the House. *WMS Opposed*
 7. [Living organ donor protection](#) - A bill to prohibit discrimination by insurance companies against living organ donors **FAILED** to be introduced in the House.
 8. [Ban on COVID-19 vaccine passports](#) - A bill to prohibit discrimination based on COVID-19 vaccination status in insurance, access of benefits, services or educational opportunities **FAILED** to be introduced in the House.
 9. [Highway safety child restraints](#) - A bill to require that all children under the age of two be in rear-facing child restraints, and clarifying that child restraint systems should not be used in front seats with airbags **FAILED** to be introduced in the House. *WMS Supported*
 10. [Wyoming medical cannabis](#) - A bill to authorize and legalize medical marijuana/cannabis **FAILED** to be introduced in the House. *WMS Opposed*
 11. [Human life equality - prohibiting discriminatory abortions](#) - A bill to prohibit abortions based on discrimination **FAILED** to be heard in Committee of the Whole by deadline.
 12. [COVID and mRNA vaccine status privacy and discrimination](#) - A bill to prohibit discrimination based on a person's COVID-19 or messenger RNA vaccination status **FAILED** in the Senate (15-15). *WMS Opposed*
 13. [Child protection dangerous drugs](#) - A bill that would have required physicians to be mandatory reporters of pregnant women suffering from substance abuse **FAILED** in committee. *WMS Opposed*
 14. [Massage therapy practice act](#) - A bill to establish a licensing board and requirements for licensing massage therapists **FAILED** to be introduced in the Senate.
 15. [Penalties for mandating COVID-19 vaccinations-2](#) - A bill to prohibit any public servant or from mandating or enforcing existing mandates related to COVID-19 vaccination **FAILED** introduction in the Senate (23-7). *WMS Opposed*
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WWAMI Day at the Capitol

Each year, the Legislature looks forward to WWAMI day at the Capitol. Students of the current

first-year class convene in Cheyenne for a legislative lunch, introductions in the House and Senate, and private meeting with the Governor (pictured above). This year's group was fortunate enough to be invited onto the Senate floor by Former Senate President Drew Perkins (R-Casper) and were later cheered and praised in the House of Representatives after a warm introduction from Minority Floor Leader Cathy Connolly (D- Laramie).

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 2022 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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