

ADVOCACY

| Advocating for Wyoming Doctors and Their Patients Since 1903 |

February 28 - March 4, 2022 ~ Session Update

Details Matter

This third week saw a lot of great debate both in committees and on the House and Senate floors. WMS continued our work of following the bills on our tracker through the process while focusing on a few important amendments that propose to bring big change to the state. Those changes stand to potentially benefit Wyoming greatly, but as is true with all things, the details really matter. One of those amendments warrants a little deeper dive.

[Senate File 66](#) - ARPA funding, started its journey in the House of Representatives. Included in that bill are hundreds of thousands of dollars dedicated to bringing relief to healthcare, stabilizing existing healthcare infrastructure, and supporting critical programs that address access and availability of healthcare. One [amendment](#) that was brought to the mix a little late in the game is an amendment to allocate \$1 Million to develop and establish an accredited PA school within the College of Health Sciences at UW to train five PAs each year.

The sponsor of this amendment has repeatedly spent precious political capital on efforts aimed at addressing Wyoming's healthcare access issues and provider shortage concerns. WMS needed to offer our appreciation to the sponsor of this amendment, recognizing the spirit of his intent and ongoing passionate support of healthcare, while urging caution around the degree to which the details matter and how much harm can be done if we don't get those details right. The process perfectly demonstrated the value of having advocates inside the Capitol working to ensure that all of the players are at the table when contemplating significant policy shifts or initiating new programs.

Because the amendment was drafted absent consultation with key administrators at the University of Wyoming, it raised concerns. Many questions surfaced around the amendment: which provider shortage areas should be prioritized, how expending one-time federal funds to start a program without any plan for sustainability might work, and what long-term sustainability might cost or require, were just a few.

WMS attempted to connect leaders of the Wyoming Association of Physician

Assistants (WAPA) with key lawmakers to ensure the PA perspective was also included in the debate without success. Timing deadlines didn't lend themselves well to ensuring these important questions, among so many others, were answered or that the organization representing the PA profession had a voice in the conversation.

Despite WMS efforts to persuade sponsors to slow down a bit to include the right stakeholders and get the details right, Senate File 66 passed the House with the amendment intact. Currently, the bill appropriates \$1 Million in federal ARPA funds to the University of Wyoming with direction to start a PA school in close alignment with current medical training programs wherein five PA students can remotely participate in courses from community college around the state. Several long-time friends of medicine in the House also attempted to help by changing the amendment to instead fund a comprehensive study of Wyoming's healthcare workforce that could inform where funds would be best spent in establishing new training programs. Ultimately, the final result was keeping the guidance for UW to start a PA program with another \$200,000 directed toward an interim study of Wyoming healthcare workforce needs.

Senate File 66 will be heard Monday morning, March 7, at 8:00 am by the Joint Conference Committee (JCC) tasked with reconciling the different House and Senate versions of the bill. The Senate did not include any language about establishing a PA program which means the JCC has a great deal of latitude in Monday's reconciliation hearing.

WMS will remain involved and will watch the proceedings closely. It does all just go to show how much impact a tiny amendment can make and the value of advocacy. Thank you to all of our members for supporting the work of WMS and making our involvement in this important process possible.

[WMS Legislative Bill Tracker](#)



Wyoming Medical Society
Advocating for doctors and their patients since 1903

Session Schedule & Coming Deadlines

This week, bills had to be passed out of their originated chamber on third reading by Tuesday, March 1. This deadline is referred to as cross-over and signals when bills must switch from their originating chamber to the second chamber for consideration. Any bill moving forward in this year's process must be reported out of committee in the second chamber by Monday, March 7.

Thursday, March 10, is the last day for bills to be heard on Third Reading, with Friday, March 11, scheduled as the last day of the 2022 Budget Session.

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:

Brian Gee, MD
Robert Monger, MD



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*
 16. [Pharmacy benefit managers act enhancements](#) A bill to enhance regulation on pharmacy benefit managers with significant cost estimations from state agencies and insurance companies to end consumers was **TABLED** meaning it will not move forward in this session's process but will likely be prioritized as an interim topic for 2022.
-



There's never been a better time to pay attention and be on alert in Wyoming politics. WMS encourages all members to take a few minutes out of their day to tune in to the legislative proceedings that are all live-streamed on YouTube. Whether it's a committee hearing you catch or a few minutes of floor debate, you will likely hear an exchange of opinions and ideas that will raise your eyebrows, to say the least.

Politics, personal agendas, and ideologies are playing an imbalanced role in important decisions that will impact Wyoming. Every day, lawmakers are voting on issues that will alter how patients access healthcare and the autonomy physicians and PAs need to care for their patients based on current, evidence-based, best practices rather than the latest misguided social media post.

WMS would love to see more physicians involved in policy-making in the state. Wyoming desperately needs your expertise, education, experience, and invaluable perspectives to make sound decisions for the future of this state and its residents. WMS is here to help anyone who might have an interest in discussing these opportunities further.

If you're feeling inspired, or know someone who would be great, it's helpful to know that Wyoming's candidate filing period is May 12-27, 2022. More information can be found on the [Wyoming Secretary of State's Election Page](#).

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.



Wyoming Medical Society
Advocating for doctors and their patients since 1903