NoHLA

Northwest Health Law Advocates

First Friday Forum

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Session Overview

- The state's 2024 legislative session ended on time on March 7th
- This was a "short session" in the biennial cycle
- Legislature introduced 1,615 bills in 2024 and passed 379 bills - Governor has 20 days to sign or veto
- Legislature added $2.1B in the supplemental operating budget, bringing biennial spending to $71.9B for July 2023 - June 2025

2024 Session Key Dynamics

- Election year
- Ballot initiatives
- Relatively stable budget, with limited new investments given modest projected revenue and no new taxes
- Continued health focus on behavioral health, housing/homelessness, workforce, difficult-to-discharge patients

Select Public Coverage Bills

HB 1941, Health homes for medically complex children	Requires the Health Care Authority to submit a state plan amendment to allow Medicaid-eligible children with medically complex conditions to voluntarily enroll in a health home.
SB 5580, Maternal health outcomes	Expands income eligibility for Apple Health pregnancy/postpartum coverage to 210% of the Federal Poverty Level and improves supportive prenatal and perinatal services.
SB 5632, Worker health care protection	By Jan. 2025, requires the Exchange to establish a worker health plan access program for Washingtonians who lose employer or labor trust health coverage as a result of a labor dispute. Subject to funding, the Exchange must provide enrollment assistance for such workers.
SB 6079, MCO access to juvenile records	Allows Medicaid managed care organizations and behavioral health administrative services organizations to access county juvenile detention facility records for the purposes of care coordination.

Select Commercial Coverage Bills

HB 1508: Health Care Cost Transparency Board	Requires the Health Care Cost Transparency Board to study trends in underinsurance and employer-sponsored insurance, and hold an annual public hearing on affordability cost trends.
HB 1979, Inhalers & Epinephrine Autoinjectors	Requires state-regulated health plans to limit cost-sharing for at least one kind of inhaler and epinephrine autoinjector to $35 for a 30-day supply.
SB 5986: Ground ambulance balance billing	Bans ground ambulance balance billing in state-regulated commercial insurance (with opt-in for self-insured) and sets limits on the amount out-of-network ground ambulance providers can charge.
SB 6127, Post-exposure prophylaxis	Requires hospitals to adopt a policy for dispensing and delivering a 28-day supply of PEP drugs following a patient's possible exposure to HIV. Starting in 2025, state-regulated private health plans and Medicaid may not impose cost-sharing or require prior authorization for HIV PEP drugs.
SB 6228, Behavioral health coverage	Makes a number of changes related to substance use disorder (SUD) treatment access, including: starting in 2025, state-regulated health plans or Medicaid managed care organizations must authorize inpatient or residential treatment for at least 14 day initially, and at least 7 days thereafter. Requires HCA and OIC to jointly consider when updates to the ASAM criteria must be applied as a single medical necessity standard for SUD treatment.

Notable Bills That Didn't Pass

- HB 2119, Medical debt garnishment
- HB 2361, Exchange standardized health plans
- SB 5241: Keep Our Care Act, preventing anticompetitive health care mergers
- SB 6257, Charity care residency restrictions

And many more…

2024 Operating Budget Highlights

Funded

- $28.38M in additional funds for Apple Health Expansion/ Medicaid-like program starting this July
- Apple Health continuous eligibility for children 0-6 in CHIP *(contingent on federal approval)*
- Apple Health reimbursement for doula services *(contingent on federal approval)* and to contract for a statewide doula hub and referral system
- Exchange study of auto-enrollment for people losing Medicaid
- DSHS study to expand SSI-related Medicaid
- Funding for DSHS customer service

NOT Funded

- *Apple Health vision hardware*
- *Certain recommendations of the Health Technology Assessment program for Apple Health, such as expanded bariatric surgery*
- *Additional long-term care slots for undocumented individuals*

Learn More and Get Involved

- NoHLA's full legislative wrap-up slides: https://nohla.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2024-Legislative-Session-Wrap-Up-3-20-24.pdf

- Sign up for NoHLA's newsletter updates: www.nohla.org

- Look up a bill by number or topic: https://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/

- Find budget documents: https://fiscal.wa.gov/