First Friday Forum: State Legislative Updates

Lee Che LEONG
Northwest Health Law Advocates (NoHLA)
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Lee.Che@nohla.org

2024 Legislative Session

Washington's legislature is in session until March 7th.

- This is a "short session" in the biennial legislative cycle
- Final supplemental biennial budget for July 2024 to June 2025 expected next week
- Session is hybrid: remote testimony is allowed
- Passed bills await signature or veto

Hot Topics

There have been hundreds of health & social service items proposed. Here are a few we're watching:

Issue	Bill #	Description	More Info
Protecting Preventive Services	HB 1957 **PASSED,** *pending signature*	Codifies the ACA preventive services requirements in state law. Reaction to lawsuit attacking federal preventive services law	*Braidwood v Becerra*, currently at 5th circuit.
Improving Maternal Health Outcomes	SB 5580 **PASSED,** *pending signature*	Expands income eligibility for Apple Health pregnancy/postpartum coverage to 210% FPL by Nov 2024 and other supportive maternity services.	Passed Senate & House with bipartisan support
Immigrant health equity	(n/a) budget	Efforts to increase funding for Medicaid like health coverage for undocumented immigrants for this July's program launch & strengthen 2023 budget investment. However, no affordability gap study at HBE in either budget.	https://nohla.org/immigrant_health_nohla_acrs_2401-2/ ***Advocates urging Senate to match House investment,*** *see next slide*

Apple Health Expansion/Medicaid-like 2024 Budget Proposals

	House proposal	Senate proposal	2023 Budget	*Campaign ask*
Medicaid-like "Apple Health Expansion" *No premium, $0 cost share*	$77m total ($27.5 additional)	$52.4m total ($2.9m additional)	$49.5m ***(now estimated to cover only 6,500-9k)***	*Funding to "cover 25,000 people"*
Additional budget specific funds	$1m community outreach	$100k report	--	*$3m cmty outreach* *$250k affordability study* *$100k report*
Total additional (includes DSHS + admin)	$29.4m additional	$3.8m additional	$0	

Hot Topics, continued…

Issue	Bill #	Description	More Info
Keep Our Care Act	SB 5241/ HB 1263	Requires public process to determine if health entity consolidations reduce access to affordable quality care.	https://fairhealthprices.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Keep-Our-Care-Act-2024-fact-sheet.pdf *Passed Senate.* ***Awaiting House floor vote***
Prohibits surprise ambulance bills	HB 2285/ SB 5986 **PASSED,** *pending signature*	Prohibits surprise bills from ground ambulance rides as an out-of-network health service charge, caps at 325% Medicare	https://fairhealthprices.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024-Ground-Ambulance-Fact-Sheet.pdf
Oversight to control health care costs	HB 1508/ SB 5519 **PASSED,** *pending signature*	Strengthens the Health Care Cost Transparency Board	https://fairhealthprices.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024-HCCTB-Fact-Sheet.pdf
Standardize Exchange Health Plans	HB 2361/ SB 6258	Phases in requirement that only standard plans be offered on Health Plan Finder	Passed House. ***Awaiting Senate floor vote***

Additional topics…

Issue	Bill #	Description	More Info
Creating license for interpreters & translators	SB 5995 *Not moving forward this session*	Moves interpreter certification from DSHS to DOL license and requires WA state licensing by 2029	see also SB 5810 (dead)
LTC Resident Rights	HB 1859 *Not moving forward this session*	Extends existing federal rights for nursing home residents to residents of assisted living facilities, adult family homes, and veterans' homes.	
Increasing access to free public school meals	HB 2058/ SB 5964 *Not moving forward this session**	Requires public schools, charter schools, and tribal schools to provide breakfast and lunch each school day to any students at no charge as of 2024-25 school year.	Expansion of HB 1527 *Both House & Senate budgets include $45m
Charity Care Residency Restrictions	SB 6257 *Not moving forward this session*	Restricts definition of who is eligible to charity care to WA residents *NOTE: did not survive cut-off; however, ongoing discussions likely*	current guidance: https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-09/CharityCareISCC2301.pdf

You're Invited!

NoHLA's Legislative Review
Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at noon

Join Emily Brice, NoHLA Deputy Director, and Erin Dziedzic, Principal of Dziedzic Public Affairs, for a round up of what happened with health care this legislative session and highlights of the budget.

Key Resources

Learn more about legislative proposals:

- Sign up for NoHLA updates: www.nohla.org
- Look up a bill by number or topic: https://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/
- How to participate in the legislative process: https://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Participating.aspx
- Governor Inslee's proposed 2024 budgets: https://ofm.wa.gov/budget/state-budgets/gov-inslees-proposed-2024-supplemental-budgets
- House/Senate proposed 2024 operating budgets https://fiscal.wa.gov/statebudgets/operatingbudgetmain