

Capitol News

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Melissa Johnson, WSLHA Lobbyist

The 2025 legislative session begins on Monday! Almost 500 bills have been prefiled, Governor-elect Ferguson has been busy making appointments and hiring policy staff, and newly elected and appointed legislators are racing to get situated in Olympia.

The first few days of the session will include opening ceremonies and Governor Inslee's final State of the State address. The House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Ways & Means Committee will hear Governor Inslee's budget on Monday and Tuesday. Governor-Elect Ferguson recently gave a [Seattle Times Interview](#) where he discussed his own plans and released a budget priorities document, prioritizing K12 and public safety. Ferguson's staff also emailed all state legislators with a request that each legislator "identify at least one program that is not achieving its intended objectives or delivering meaningful results for the people of Washington."

There will be many [new faces](#) at the Legislature, with about 30 new legislators elected or appointed. And many House members either ran for or have been appointed to the Senate. These include Rep. Marcus Riccelli (3rd district), Rep. Jessica Bateman (22nd district), Rep. Tina Orwall (33rd district), Rep. Emily Alvarado (34th district) and Rep. Vandana Slatter (48th district).

Rep. Tana Senn (41st) has been appointed to lead the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and as of today, an appointment to her vacant seat has not been made. The same goes for seat appointments resulting from Senator Joe Nguyen's (34th district) appointment to lead the Department of Commerce. It appears a Senate appointment to that seat will not be made until later this month.

There are several work sessions of interest scheduled this week. The House Health Care & Wellness Committee will be reviewing the Health Care Authority and the Health Benefit Exchange on Monday; the Department of Health on Wednesday; and the Office of the Insurance Commissioner on Thursday. The Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee will have a work session on access to health insurance coverage on Thursday and access to primary care, inpatient care, and long term care on Friday.

WSLHA Priorities

WSLHA has two priority bills this session. The first is a re-introduction of last session's bill requiring a cost-of-living increase in reimbursement for contracts between health care providers not employed or affiliated with a hospital and insurance companies.

Our second priority bill is legislation that would allow health care providers to directly negotiate reimbursement rates and other contract provisions with insurers. We've heard your frustration at insurers refusing to negotiate your contracts; this bill would allow like providers in regional areas to band together and negotiate contract provisions, using the leverage a large group of providers commands.

WSLHA joins about 18 other provider organizations in support of these bills. Bill numbers to come soon.

