

WSLHA Priorities

[HB 1589](#), our **fair contracting bill**, is scheduled for a committee vote in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on Wednesday! We are working with the prime sponsor, Rep. Bronoske, and our coalition on amendments to both strengthen the bill and respond to some comments by the insurers. Click [here](#) to ask your legislators to support HB 1589.

Health Care Bills of Interest

On Thursday, the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee will hear [SB 5683](#). This bill requires health carriers to report **timeliness of claims payments** to providers to the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC), to be published on the OIC website. This bill will provide public transparency in claims payments by insurers. **If you would like to message your legislators about this bill, click [here](#).**

[SB 5254](#), the **medical records** bill from the Washington State Association for Justice (trial lawyers). This bill caps how much providers can charge for medical records at \$50. Providers, including WSLHA, have weighed in with comments stating that the \$50 is too low to reimburse for the staff time involved in producing medical records. No committee vote scheduled yet. **If you would like to message your legislators about this bill, click [here](#).**

[HB 1392](#) and [SB 5372](#) create the Medicaid Access Program to **increase Medicaid reimbursement rates** to the Medicare rate as of December 31, 2024. This includes reimbursement for emergency department, maternity services, inpatient and outpatient surgery, inpatient visits, office and home visits, consults, and other services. The Medicaid Access Program will be funded by a “covered lives” assessment on health insurers and Medicaid managed care organizations. A hearing is scheduled on SB 5372 in the Senate Health Care & Wellness Committee on Thursday. **If you would like to message your legislators about this bill, click [here](#).**

General News

The pace keeps increasing at the Legislature, with the first cutoff deadline approaching next week. All bills must pass their policy committee by Friday the 21st to keep moving through the process. Bills that do not pass their policy committees by that deadline are likely dead for the session. The fiscal committee cutoff is just around the corner on February 28th. It's likely that many bills will die on the 28th due to their fiscal impact to the state budget.

The budget deficit is getting more real every day. This week, we learned that Governor Inslee's "book one" budget (the all-cuts budget that was never made public) contained over \$7 billion worth of cuts to health care, human services, higher education, long term care, and developmental disabilities. We expect to see the results of Governor Ferguson's 6% budget reduction exercise sometime the week of February 24th. The results will be sobering indeed.