

WSLHA Priorities

[HB 1589](#), **our fair contracting bill**, was voted out of the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on Friday with a strong bipartisan vote of 16-2! **It is now scheduled for a hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday.** It must pass that committee by Friday to remain alive. The good news is that HB 1589 does not impact the state's general fund. Our bill is paid for by OIC's Regulatory Account.

Health Care Bills of Interest

On Thursday, the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee heard [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. It passed the committee on Friday and has been referred to the Ways & Means Committee.

[HB 1392](#) and [SB 5372](#) create the Medicaid Access Program to **increase Medicaid reimbursement rates** to the Medicare rate as of December 31, 2024. The House version is the vehicle moving forward. It's scheduled for a vote in the Appropriations Committee on Thursday.

On Friday, the House Health Care & Wellness Committee passed [HB 1686](#), the bill creating a **health care entity registry**. It was amended in committee to only apply to corporations or organizations that own or control more than one entity, removing most small independent practices from the bill. It has been referred to the Appropriations Committee. The Senate version, SB 5561, died in committee.

[SB 5254](#), the **medical records** bill from the Washington State Association for Justice (trial lawyers), passed the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee on Friday. This bill was amended in committee to cap electronic medical records charges at \$50 and directs the Department of Health to conduct rule-making on charges for paper records. It is now in the Ways & Means Committee.

[SB 5387](#), the **corporate practice of medicine** bill, passed the Senate Health Care & Wellness Committee on Friday. It was amended to expand the scope of the bill to all health care entities, not just physician practices. It is now in the Ways & Means Committee.

General News

The 2025 legislative session is now one third of the way over. Friday, February 21st was the cutoff for bills to be voted out of policy committees in the House of Origin. Fewer than 20% of bills introduced become law and this was the first hurdle that bills must jump to stay alive. It is a very quick turnaround

until the next cutoff on Friday, February 28th, where bills with a fiscal impact to the state budgets must be voted out of the fiscal committees (Finance, Appropriations, Transportation, and Ways & Means).

Between now and then, legislators will spend long days and nights in those committees hearing and voting on bills. Of course, there's a great deal of gray area there, as bills that are deemed by majority leadership to be "necessary to implement the budget" or "NTIB," are exempt from these cutoffs. This designation is used to prevent majority party legislation from dying, allowing action until the gavel drops on Sine Die. Bills with minimal or no fiscal impact advance directly to the Rules Committee for further consideration.

In budget news, the House Democrats have released [a website](#) showing what they suggest a no-revenue budget looks like. This week, we should see the results of Governor Ferguson's budget reduction exercise.