

WSLHA Priorities: Adult Medicaid PT/OT/ST Elimination

We know that lawmakers have heard loud and clear the opposition to eliminating the PT/OT/Speech adult Medicaid benefit. Between health care providers, patient organizations, and advocates in the I/DD community, hundreds of emails, calls, and letters have been sent to legislators asking them to reject this in the final budget. So now we wait...we could see the final budget as soon as Tuesday.

WSLHA Priorities: Bills of Interest

[SB 5845](#) requires health carriers to **pay clean claims within 30 calendar days** and prohibits insurers from **requesting refunds** from health care providers on claims payments beyond one year of the original payment. It passed the House and returns to the Senate for a concurrence vote in the House amendments.

[HB 1155](#), the **non-compete bill**, passed the Senate on a party line vote. This bill makes any noncompetition covenant void and unenforceable, regardless of when the parties entered into the covenant. The bill takes effect on June 30, 2027. It returns to the House for a concurrence vote in the Senate amendments.

[SB 6226](#), legislation regarding **the use of telehealth in speech and hearing services**, passed the House and returns to the Senate for their approval of the House amendments.

[SB 5968](#) requires state agencies with sufficient existing resources to report data on **credentials** they issue. It also requires state agencies to establish published decision times for all credentials and provide application fee refunds if the agency fails to meet its published decision time. Unfortunately, this bill died in the House.

General News

With less than a week to complete their work before the scheduled **March 12th adjournment**, lawmakers focused their efforts last week on passing policy bills before yesterday's March 6th opposite chamber floor cutoff deadline and negotiating the final budget and corresponding revenue packages. This week, in addition to budget and revenue work, legislators will also address bills that were amended in the opposite chamber to reconcile those differences.

On Friday, Rep. Berg released the latest version of the **Millionaire's Tax**, SB 6346. This draft retains sales tax exemptions on diapers and hygiene products and tax breaks for businesses found in earlier versions of the bill and adds a sales tax exemption for over-the-counter drugs. It also expands eligibility for the Working Families Tax Credit, adds funding for free breakfast and lunch for all Washington students, and dedicates 5% of the revenue to child care and early learning programs.

The new version also includes a sales tax exemption for presentations given by nonprofit organizations and a sales tax exemption for schools, school districts, and ESDs beginning July 1, 2026. These items were considered taxable income under last session's SB 5814. It also adds exemptions for hospitals and for warehousing and reselling of prescription drugs beginning January 1, 2029. This version removed the dedicated revenue to county public defense services found in earlier versions of the bill.

Presumably, this version has the votes to pass the House, with a vote expected early this week. Governor Ferguson has indicated that he will sign this version into law.

As thoughts turn to **elections**, a growing number of lawmakers are announcing that they will not seek reelection, signaling notable turnover ahead of the next biennium. The wave of departures includes veteran members and relatively newer legislators alike, reflecting a mix of retirements, career transitions, and bids for other offices. Rumors are circulating for many additional vacancies, but the following members have formally announced:

House:

4th LD - Schmidt (R) running for Spokane County Commissioner
6th LD - Volz (R) elected Spokane Co. Treasurer
6th LD - Graham (R) not running
15th LD - Dufault (R) running for Senate
26th LD - Valdez (Caldier) (R) not running *swing district
29th LD - Mena (D) running for Senate (opens H State Gov Chairship)
32nd LD - Ryu (D) challenging Salomon (opens H TED&V Chairship)
49th LD - Wylie (D) running for Clark County Auditor

Senate:

8th LD - Boehnke (R) running for Congress
15th LD - Torres (R) running for 8th LD
29th LD - Conway (D) not running
37th LD - Saldaña (D) running for King County Council (opens S Labor & Commerce Chairship)
42nd LD - Shewmake (D) not running (opens S EE&T Chairship) *swing district

The departures will reshape committee leadership, caucus dynamics, and institutional knowledge in 2027, setting the stage for a period of recalibration in both chambers and for both parties.