

## **2015 WSLHA BOARD REPORT**

**BOARD POSITION:** *WSLHA Lobbyist*

**LIAISON TO:** *President*

**BOARD MEMBER NAME:** *Melissa Johnson*

**BOARD MEETING DATE:** *January 24, 2015*

### **2015 session:**

The 2015 session began on January 12<sup>th</sup>. Legislators face a daunting task of passing a state budget that includes enough funding to satisfy the McCleary K-12 Supreme Court case (the state was found in contempt of court earlier this year and was given until this spring to come up with ample funding) while meeting the other needs and obligations of the state, including health care, social services, and transportation funding. The McCleary obligation alone is expected to be \$1.2 - \$2 billion. On top of McCleary, legislators will also be grappling with paying for Initiative 1351, which passed without including any funding to pay for it.

In the 2015 session, WSLHA will be advocating on two issues relating to insurance coverage. Along with other rehabilitation providers, WSHLA will work on legislation to combat the high therapy copays that many patients face. The bill requires copays for rehabilitation therapies to be the same as or lower than copays for primary care providers.

This legislation also addresses the problems many therapists are facing with Regence and its contractor CareCore. The bill prohibits an insurance carrier from placing like providers into different tiers; requires carriers to disclose prior authorization standards or criteria; requires carriers to respond to prior authorization requests within 24 hours; requires prior authorization decisions to be made by licensed Washington providers; and prohibits a carrier from requiring a provider to give that carrier's negotiated discount to other lines of insurance that the carrier contracts with.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES OR ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Discussion of legislative agenda.