

WSSA Advocacy Update
01/12/2020

Thank you for staying tuned to the advocacy and legislative activity in Washington and the nation that affects our practice.

James M. Burkman, M.D. is a longstanding member of WSSA's Board of Directors, a past president, and a delegate to the ASA. He recently had a [letter published in the Spokesman Review](#) on the "surprise" billing issue. It is worth a read.

- <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2019/oct/01/james-m-burkman-we-need-a-fair-system-to-stop-surp/>

WSSA Board member Tim Clement, M.D. also had [a letter published in the Wenatchee World](#) on the same topic:

- https://www.wenatcheeworld.com/opinion/rural-health-care-threatened-by-benchmarking-resolution/article_53a15fec-0c1c-11ea-8a0f-eb75a35a300c.html

Tim Clement also represented anesthesiologists at October's WSMA Annual Meeting. The WSMA HOD resolved to, among other things,

- Advocate to amend state law to exempt all physicians from the B&O tax surcharge resulting from 2019 House Bill 2158.
- Pursue, with stakeholder input, an aggressive strategy to reduce administrative burden.
- Support advocacy to eliminate the buprenorphine DEA waiver requirement.
- Support services to help assist physicians, residents, students, and PAs who are suffering symptoms of depression and burnout.
- Promote greater gender equity in medicine.

Washington's Balance Billing Protection Act took effect on Jan. 1, 2020. Positive news is that anesthesia services are currently not part of the state's all-payer claims database. An omnibus rulemaking is underway to flesh out elements of the legislation that require more detail, so stay tuned.

The Washington Department of Health has adopted medical license fee increases for MDs and PAs starting Feb. 1, 2020. The WSSA opposed these increases and, with the WSMA, achieved some concessions by the DOH, but the increases remain substantial. The DOH agreed to revisit this concerning issue in two years.

The Health Care Authority has updated its Apple Health (Medicaid) opioid clinical policy to align with the federal SUPPORT Act passed in 2018. New requirements include an attestation that chronic pain best practices are being followed when prescribing more than the acute policy limit within a 90-day period, and prior authorization on claims that exceed 120 morphine milligram equivalent (MME) limit.

The 2020 election is coming up soon and we want physicians' views to be at the front of their thoughts as they campaign. **PAPAC** and **WAMPAC** are the nonpartisan campaign arms of the WSSA and WSMA respectively. Please consider supporting both of these committees so that we can continue to build relationships with elected officials which needs to start during their campaigns.

[Click here](#) for the PAPAC site.

[Click here](#) for the WAMPAC site.