

WSSA Advocacy Update 02/10/2021 (Q1)

The 2021 legislative session convened on Monday, Jan. 11 and, while the session is virtual this year, many bills are up for discussion that will be relevant to the practice of anesthesiology. WSSA will continue to publish our advocacy and legislative updates at least quarterly to share important information and initiatives with WSSA members.

The WSMA will held the 2021 Legislative Summit virtually on Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021. There were excellent updates regarding the State's political agenda and important advocacy efforts relevant to physicians. Relevant topics are highlighted below.

While the WSMA is prioritizing primary care and behavioral health, the COVID-19 pandemic and telehealth; several bills are important to WSSA members. These include **SB 5169 addressing PPE reimbursement** by insurance carriers, **SB 5195 addressing naloxone prescription requirements**, and **SB 5229 on Health Equity CME** requirements. There is also legislation addressing COVID-19 liability protections.

Scope of practice issues are still with us with naturopaths, pharmacists, pshycologists, ARNPs, and practitioners of acupuncture and Eastern Medicine. The Senate Health Care Committee approved SB 5018, **modifying provisions relating to the practice of acupuncture and Eastern medicine**. This bill is similar to legislation that was passed during the 2020 legislative session and subsequently vetoed for technical reasons. Another scope of practice issue is the Board of Naturopathy moving to include **nonsurgical cosmetic procedures in naturopathic practice**. The Department of Health has submitted to the Legislature its report regarding the **proposal to add prescriptive authority to psychologists' scope of practice**. The proposal submitted by the Washington State Psychological Association does not meet the sunrise criteria and is therefore not supported by the DOH. WSSA opposes efforts to expand non-physician practitioners' prescriptive authority and any scope of practice increases that do not stipulate education and training commensurate with what a physician receives. We would like to thank everyone who submitted a comment on the proposal. Your expertise and experience provided the DOH with invaluable feedback that is reflected in the final report.

While this issue is not likely to change reimbursement for anesthesiologists, WSSA has signed on in opposition of **SB 5222 which mandates that ARNPs be paid at the same rate as physicians** as we advocate for reimbursement that reflects training and experience.

WSSA is actively discussing **HB 1383 to expand the scope of practice for Respiratory Therapists** to better understand the potential changes and their implications.

A multitude of decisions are made in the Washington State Legislature by our elected officials that affect your medical practice, your ability to serve your patients, and your bottom line. In the past legislative session, the Washington State Legislature made decisions which affected reimbursement level, medical liability premiums, hospital operations, quality control measures and more.

PAPAC allows us yet another opportunity to show the Legislature who we are and what we care about. The more exposure we get, the greater an understanding the Legislature has of us. As you know, the more educated you are on an issue, the greater your ability is to make the right decision. We need the Legislature to make the right decisions for our specialty and to do that we need to get more involved in the political arena.

If we ever need to expend political capital in a fight for our specialty, we first need to create some. Requests for contributions to Washington state and local candidates are considered by the Washington Anesthesiologist's PAPAC Board. Requests for contributions to candidates for national office are managed by the American Society of Anesthesiologists ASAPAC.

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