

WSSA Advocacy Update
06/24/2020

A lot has happened since COVID came to Washington State. Here is an update on state and national advocacy issues for the past several months. The WSMA has the most up-to-date resources on COVID including testing and financial relief mechanisms. Please [contact us](#) if there is a topic that you think we missed, something on which you would like to take action, or to get more information.

Several WSSA members took part in the **ASA's Virtual Federal Legislative Conference** on May 3. It was an educational and inspiring event with presentations by ASA leaders Drs. Mary Dale Peterson and Beverly Philip as well as several political representatives. There was a helpful "Introduction to Advocacy" and the WSSA will be leading virtual meetings with our state politicians in the coming weeks. [Contact us](#) to get involved.

One trend that is apparent is the increasing federalization of health care policy. This increases the importance of advocacy at the federal level. We have seen this with the recent VA movement giving CRNAs full practice authority and CMS reviewing requirements for supervision. There has been a presidential order to determine which rules from the COVID crisis should be made permanent in order to facilitate economic recovery. Visit your ASA homepage to get involved and the [ASAPAC](#) can always use your support.

Scope of Practice

A **psychologist scope of practice** sunrise review is beginning and psychologists in the state are seeking prescriptive authority from the Department of Health. For many reasons, prescriptive authority would compromise patient safety and work opposing this expansion is underway.

In the wake of the pandemic, many health care practitioners are likely to seek scope of practice expansions in the name of increasing access to care. WSSA is working hard to responsibly address this pressure by psychologists, dentists, naturopaths, and other practitioners.

Balance Billing

Further rulemaking is underway to implement the State's **balance billing** law. The WSMA is advocating on our behalf to continue the ability to bundle claims, increase clarity about health plans covered under the law, and ensuring insurance carriers are in full compliance. Anesthesia claims still need to be incorporated into the dataset used to determine "commercially reasonable" reimbursement to help arbitrators settle disputes. WSSA is working hard to make sure the claims data set is fair and balanced. A draft rule will be released in July and we will keep you updated.

The Washington State Department of Health recently released [guidance on chronic pain management medications during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). The guidance is intended for healthcare workers and patients with chronic pain on long-term opioid therapy in order to maintain good public health practices during the COVID-19 pandemic and Washington's state of emergency order.

Washington Medical Commission Vacancy – Congressional District 2

The Washington Medical Commission is currently accepting applications to fill an upcoming vacancy; on Sept. 1 there will be an opening for one physician representing Congressional District 2. The Commission consists of 21 members appointed by the governor. It meets about every six weeks. There is an expectation to review multiple disciplinary cases between meetings, and additional meetings or hearings are often necessary. Additional information regarding commission membership and a link to the governor's application can be found [here](#).

Applications, including a current résumé, must be received by the WMC by July 1. If you have any questions about serving on the Commission, please contact Amelia Boyd, program manager, at amelia.boyd@wmc.wa.gov or 360.236.2727.