WSHPCO February 2021 Public Policy Report
Prepared by Leslie Emerick, Director of Public Policy

Legislative Overview

The 2021 Legislative session will go down in the history books with the dueling drama of a pandemic and armed militia threats against our Governor, Legislators, and the state capitol buildings!! The capitol in Olympia is still in a state of “Restricted Access” for the near foreseeable future with Washington State Patrol taking high security measures to protect the capital campus and the employees in this time of militia related unrest. The National Guard has finally been sent home at a cost of over $1.6 million. The federal Department of Homeland Security has issued a recent warning for potential violence in all 50 state capitols. The capitol campus already had most employees from home due to the pandemic, but some continue to work at the capital during session.

The 2021 “virtual” legislative session is now moving into its fourth week (Feb. 1 being the 22nd day of the 105-day legislative session) with new bill introductions starting to wind down. February 15th is the first big policy bill cut-off, with fiscal bills cut-off on February 22nd. Bills that have been introduced and received a public hearing must pass out of these committees to continue through the legislative process. Those bills that do not get a vote out of their respective committees by this date die for this legislative session. Since WA State has a biennial legislative session, bills that die for this session may be back next year.

So far, 1,167 bills have been introduced this session which is far less than a regular long session which typically introduces closer to 2,600 bills! Legislators were concerned about the ability pass bills in the virtual environment in a timely manner and limited the number of bills to be heard by House of Representatives to 7 bills, requested that they do not file “Companion” bills in the opposite house and focus on COVID-19, the 2-year operating budget, social justice, and climate issues. Here is a really good resource for accessing the legislature this session!

Accessing the Legislature remotely.pdf

1
COVID-19 Information

The first bills passing the legislature this session was COVID-19 related, such as extending the month-to-month waivers until the end of the state emergency orders under the Governor. (COVID-19 Proclamations Extended under SCR 8402) No one knows when the pandemic will “officially” end, so this offers some stability and consistency for health care providers and their organizations. There are several bills that direct the use of federal dollars for COVID-19 into various state funding accounts, much of which came into the state under the CARES Act.

There are also business-related bills, in particular one that provides additional funding to make up for the shortfalls in the Unemployment Insurance Account (SB 5061) due to millions being stolen through fraudulent accounts and the significant increase in unemployment due to the pandemic. SB 5061 has already passed both houses of the state legislature and is moving towards the Governor’s desk for signature! Just goes to show you that the legislature can move fast when it wants to!!

Much of my time has been spend working with the state DOH and King County to help expand access to care for in-home services agencies. The state has sent up large vaccination events in regions around the state. We were also part of the soft launch of www.findyourphasewa.com, which is fully operational now.

Getting vaccinated in King County - King County: DOH determines the distribution of vaccine for our state and eligibility for vaccination in phases. King County is currently in the state's Phase 1a and Phase 1b, Tier 1 for vaccine distribution.

Mass Vaccination Sites: DOH, along with the assistance from the Washington National Guard and local and private sector partners, is launching four mass vaccination sites across the state for people eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine under Phase 1A or Phase 1B tier 1 (PDF). Locations will be appointment only and appointments must be made in advance. To get a vaccine, you first need eligibility confirmation from Phase Finder.

Crossing state lines for vaccine: Given the limited supply of vaccine that is available at this time and our state’s commitment to equitable and fair access to vaccine, the state of Washington is requiring that those seeking COVID-19 vaccines in its four mass vaccination sites must either live or work in Washington state. If you do not live or work in Washington, please do not make vaccine appointments or travel to Washington sites for vaccines.

Location of Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kennewick</th>
<th>Spokane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ridgefield</td>
<td>Wenatchee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

February 3, 2021

**Vaccine Coordination Meetings:** I also attend the DOH Vaccine Partners meeting, and they reported that much more vaccination is heading to Washington state in the near future and they are working on multiple pathways to get the vaccine out into our communities, include mobile vaccinations for home bound patients or those with difficulty traveling.

**Department of Health (DOH)**

Department of Health Vaccine Updates:  

DOH Announcement: Help us to learn what you need to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases: To better fight COVID-19, the Washington State Department of Health (WA DOH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created an infectious disease survey for frontline healthcare workers. This survey is part of a project called Project Firstline. Project Firstline is designed to prevent the spread of infectious diseases in healthcare settings across Washington through interactive trainings and resources. For more information, please go to: Prevent COVID-19 infections in healthcare settings (govdelivery.com)

**PREP Act Authorization** for Health Care Workers with Expired or Inactive Licenses to Administer COVID-19 Vaccines: DOH, in partnership with our health profession boards and commissions, is taking action to support retired health care workers or those with inactive licenses to more easily get back into the workforce to administer the COVID-19 vaccine. The goal is to ensure we have a robust workforce to help us bring an end to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please find the attached Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP Act) authorization from Secretary of Health Dr. Umair Shah for health care workers with expired or inactive licenses to administer COVID-19 vaccines under certain circumstances.


Before registering, participants will need to have access to previous Washington state credential numbers, which may be obtained through the Department of Health’s Provider Credential Search, accessible at https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/providercredentialsearch/. After registering, participants must wait to receive confirmation from DOH that they are authorized to administer COVID-19 vaccines under Dr. Shah’s authorization. Certain health care workers with expired/inactive licenses may qualify for PREP Act coverage under both state and federal authorizations. Secretary of Health Shah’s authorization for Washington State currently allows broader participation. Questions about registration? Please email: waserv@doh.wa.gov. More Resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 vaccine training
- Department of Heath COVID-19 vaccine training resources
February 3, 2021

- Washington State Pharmacy Association immunization training
- Oregon Health Science University dental immunization training
- Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS):
  - VAERS Overview video
  - VAERS demonstration video

DOH and LNI’s Fit Testing Training Webinars: Please review the information below for important information including a recording of the webinar and additional resources on fit testing.

1. Recordings, videos and resource links (for everyone) - Please note due to the size of the slide deck slides are NOT available at this time.
2. Sign-up for small group fit testing practice and coaching (for those doing their own fit testing)
3. Obtaining a fit testing kit (for those doing their own fit testing)
4. Accessing the 3M online medical clearance system (for those doing their own fit testing)
5. Accessing mobile fit testing (for everyone)

RECORDING of 1/20 webinar (same content as 1/13) – Click here: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/1294987615467886607

Fit Testing Demonstration Videos from webinar
Part 1 Click here: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/9064256624105775619
Part 2 Click here: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/6512252752642420994

Full version UW of video shown by LNI during webinar (importance of fit): https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/3987538759800525570 Questions from the Q&A will be posted to DOH’s web page in the near future. We encourage you to reach out to us if you have specific questions about your agency or facility. Please email carolyn.ham@doh.wa.gov.

To request Consultation from LNI https://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/request-consultation/

2. Sign-up for small group fit testing practice and coaching (for doing their own fit testing)
Starting in February, DOH’s Occupational Health Nurse will be providing small group coaching for facilities and agencies who are doing their own fit testing. These practice sessions will last for 1
hour each and will be video chats via the MS Teams application. You will watch live demonstrations, and then you will practice fit testing skills and receive feedback. There will also be time for questions. You need to have a fit testing kit on hand participate in the training sessions. We will be offering these sessions again later this year, so if you don't have a kit yet, don't worry. There will be additional opportunities. To sign up for these, please fill out this SurveyMonkey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GQ5GSLZ

3. Obtaining a fit testing kit (for those doing their own fit testing)
If you are interested in obtaining a fit testing kit and you have more than 20 staff who need fit testing, please email DOH at carolyn.ham@doh.wa.gov with the following information. We do not recommend this option for smaller facilities.
- Facility Name, Facility Address, Number of staff to be fit tested, Contact person

4. Accessing the 3M online medical clearance system (for those doing their own fit testing)
If you are doing your own fit testing with a kit, you can use DOH’s account for 3M online medical evaluations. For facilities doing their own fit testing, email carolyn.ham@doh.wa.gov to get access. If you want to have a company provide mobile fit testing at your location, they will manage the medical clearance process for you – please read below for more information.

5. Accessing mobile fit testing (for everyone) Beginning in January 2021, facilities and agencies in all counties in Washington State are eligible for no-cost fit testing through funding provided by the Department of Health. Eligible facility and agency types are:
- Assisted Living Facilities
- Skilled Nursing Facilities/Nursing Homes
- Adult Family Homes
- Supported Living Agencies
- Home Care Agencies
- Home Health Agencies
- Hospice Agencies

Each county has been assigned a fit testing provider who is participating in the DOH N95 Fit Testing Project. Appointments for fit testing with these providers will begin after February 1st. To access this program, facilities should contact the fit testing provider assigned to their county directly. You do not need to contact DOH to qualify, please directly contact the fit testing provider for your area. To find the provider assigned to your county, please review the chart or map below. If your county isn’t listed below, please contact DOH (carolyn.ham@doh.wa.gov) to find out who your fit testing provider will be. Please note, if you need online medical evaluations ONLY (do NOT need mobile fit testing), you can contact DOH at carolyn.ham@doh.wa.gov.

**Palliative Care Roadmap Still Available!!** Pat Justis has located funds for a third printing of the PC Roadmap that are available until the end of March so please place your orders soon! It’s posted on DOH Rural Health webpage, as well as the WA Rural Palliative Care Initiative portal To order: https://prtonline.myprintdesk.net/DSF/
Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC)

Health insurance and coronavirus (COVID-19) frequently asked questions | Washington state Office of the Insurance Commissioner

Department of Labor and Industries Coronavirus Response Data


Public Policy

WA State Telemedicine Collaborative: The next meeting will be on March 2, 2021, 10 am-12 pm.

WSMA, WSHA, WEOLC, and HCPNW Invite Input on Revised Advance Directive and Washington POLST

RELEASE DATE: February 1, 2021

We are pleased to invite stakeholders to participate in a call for comment about the proposed revisions to the Advance Directive and Washington POLST documents. The proposed, revised documents were developed based on extensive conversations with the end-of-life stakeholder community. The goal is to streamline, clarify, and modernize the documents, and to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness in the changing health care environment.

To support participation in the call for comment, we have prepared an information package including the proposed Advance Directive and Washington POLST documents and the current (outgoing) versions of the documents. Please review the materials in the first bullet below before completing the Advance Directive survey (2nd bullet) and Washington POLST survey (3rd bullet).

- Information Package: [https://wsma.org/doc_library/resources/advance_care_planning/call_for_comment.pdf](https://wsma.org/doc_library/resources/advance_care_planning/call_for_comment.pdf)

Partners

- Washington State Medical Association and the WSMA Foundation
- Washington State Hospital Association
- Honoring Choices® Pacific Northwest, joint initiative of WSHA and the WSMA Foundation
- Washington End of Life Coalition and Washington POLST Task Force

Background and Purpose

Honoring people’s values, goals, and preferences is the cornerstone of our work. The purpose of Advance Directive and Washington POLST documents is to ensure people’s future medical decisions are accurately reflected in enforceable documents.
The proposed revisions are the result of a year-long, inclusive process. There were two tracks. The Advance Directive revisions were overseen by HCPNW’s Advance Directives Revisions Committee. The POLST revisions were overseen by the WEOLC’s POLST Task Force. Members represented diverse perspectives, including clinicians, advance care planning professionals, end-of-life care professionals, health equity experts, and the public. WSHA, WSMA, WEOLC, and HCPNW leadership engaged with stakeholders in a variety of forums to identify opportunities for improvement.

All Stakeholders Encouraged to Participate
“We encourage you to participate in this call for comment so that we ensure a wide range of voices are represented and reflected in the new documents,” says Bruce Smith, MD, Co-chair Washington POLST Task Force; Past-President, Washington End of Life Coalition; Board Member, WSMA Foundation; and Member, Honoring Choices PNW Advisory Council. "Thank you to members of the Washington POLST Task Force and the Advance Directive Revisions Committee for their work overseeing the review and revision process, as well as to all of you who have contributed to our conversations at a variety of meetings. We look forward to your input on these revised, proposed documents. With this effort, we support our goal of honoring people’s goals, values, and preferences at the end of life."

We will accept comments until February 22, 2021. Please contact jessica@wsma.org with questions.

Virtual In-Home Services Days
I am working on a new format for our In-Home Services Day and will share ASAP with our updated talking points ASAP! More to come…

Please see attached bill tracking and upcoming public hearings list!