

Week 8

Friday, March 6, was the final day for House bills to pass from the full Senate, and Senate bill to pass from the full House (except for certain bills that are considered necessary to implement the budget).

Assuming the House and Senate can come to an agreement on the three supplemental budgets (operating, capital, and transportation), these remaining days of the session will be spent working out differences between the versions that passed in each chamber and passing any other policy bills that are needed to implement the funding provisions of the budgets.

SSB 6061 - Telemedicine training - has passed and is on its way to the Governor's desk for signature. This bill requires health care providers who provide clinical services through telemedicine to complete training in telemedicine beginning on January 1, 2021.

SHB 2883 - Expanding adolescents access to behavioral health, is also going to be signed by the Governor. This bill Expands family-initiated treatment to include adolescent treatment in a residential treatment facility, removes time limits for family-initiated treatment in a residential treatment facility and instead requires the independent assessment of medical necessity to recur every 30 days while the adolescent is receiving treatment.

Both prior authorization bills, 2ESB 5887 and SB 5601, passed as well. The lack of transparency about how claims are determined, administered, and paid for has been confusing for consumers as they often do not understand how their benefits can be utilized. 5601 will require health benefit managers to register with the insurance commissioner's office resulting in full transparency for those entities that decide what services patients qualify for.

There will be more committee hearings and floor action through Thursday with the legislature "promising" us they'll get done on time. We don't anticipate a special session, but anything can happen! Stay tuned.

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