

## Lobbyist Report

Month May 2021



### Meetings/Workgroups Attended

5/7 WMHCA Legislative Meeting

5/18 HCA Monthly Update Meeting

5/21 ACA Discussion Meeting

### Legislative Summary for Mental Health Specifically (To Send to Members)

The Governor used the month of May to finish signing passed legislation in to law. In a typical year, these bill signings are open to the public but with the state still following COVID restrictions, the ceremonies were conducted all over the state in designated locations. The following is a list of WMHCA supported bills that were signed:

Bills Passed & Signed By Governor:

[SHB 1007](#) - Supervised experience/Distance: Concerning the completion of supervised experience through distance supervision.

[E2SHB 1086](#) - Behavior Health Consumers: Creating the state office of behavioral health consumer advocacy.

[ESHB 1196](#) - Audio-only telemedicine: Concerning audio-only telemedicine

[E2SHB 1477](#) - National 988 System: Implementing the national 988 system to enhance and expand behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention services.

[SB 5073](#) - Involuntary commitment: Concerning involuntary commitment

[ESSB 5470](#) - Mental health advance directives: Updating mental health advance directive laws.

[ESB 5478](#) - State v. Blake decision: Addressing the State v. Blake decision. (REVISED FOR ENGROSSED: Responding to the State v. Blake decision by addressing justice system responses and behavioral health prevention, treatment, and related services.

With all of these new laws, the question is now, who is going to pay for all of this? Each bill has funding listed in it's execution plan but those terms are always subject to change. Legislators will want to show their constituents that they can live up to their promises and over the interim as bills are implemented, it will be interesting to see what works and what doesn't. The "short" 2022 session is where bill clean up happens and therefore it is imperative for WMHCA to keep priority bills on the forefront of legislator's minds.

WMHCA is in the planning stages of determining our priorities for the interim and the 2022 legislative session. We are in discussions with ACA, HCA, DOH and coalition members to set our agenda moving forward. If you have suggestions or input on potential legislation please contact [sara@sarastewartinc.com](mailto:sara@sarastewartinc.com)

### Meetings Requested

The following is a list of legislators that I suggest we start speaking with in June/July:

Rep. Tara Simmons (D)

Rep. Tina Orwall (D)

Sen. Manka Dhingra (D)

Rep. Laurie Jenkins (D)

Rep. Marcus Riccelli (D)

Sen. Emily Randall (D)

Rep. Eileen Cody (D)

Rep. Jessica Bateman (D)

Rep. Lauren Davis (D)

Rep. Brad Klippert (R)

Rep. Alex Ybarra (R)

Sen. Curtis King (R)

Rep. Jacquelin Maycumber (R)

Rep. Tom Dent (R)

### **General Legislative News**

While many good bills have been signed by the Governor, many are outraged at the amount of vetoes he has issued thus far. From COVID-19 Data Privacy to tribal human rights to pieces of the transportation budget, Gov. Inslee is under fire from both parties. The transportation budget issues are at the forefront and it is likely a special session will be called sometime this summer. During a special session, all bills that did not pass in 2021 will be "alive" again and while the legislature will be focusing on the transportation package, they are also able to bring up other pieces of legislation at their leisure. A special session is 30 days long and it is still unseen if it would be held virtually or in person.

COVID-19 restrictions drastically changed in mid-May with the state lessening rules on masks for vaccinated citizens. The goal is to have Washington fully reopened by June 30th. As it stands, masks are still encouraged while indoors until the CDC comes out with its final determination over the next few weeks.

Washington's state and local governments will receive [\\$7.120 billion from the coronavirus state and local fiscal recovery funds](#) (part of the American Rescue Plan Act). The state has already appropriated (assuming no gubernatorial vetoes) \$3.162 billion of its \$4.428 billion share. Counties and cities in Washington have decisions to make as well about how best to use this substantial influx of funds.

### **What's on the Horizon?**

We will be gearing up and will begin discussions on proposed goals and legislation for 2022. Higher wages for community mental health providers and attempting another try at reimbursement rates are my personal priority issues. I will be speaking with the BHC members to further discuss their agendas and subsequently, I will draw up a plan of action for WMHCA.

Other things I've been tracking or paying attention to:

Other than keeping an eye on a potential special session, things are quiet for the moment.

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