

## Lobbyist Report

Month September 2021



### Meetings/Workgroups attended

September 1 - O2G Association Meeting

September 9 - Behavioral Health Coalition

September 13 - Rep. Tarra Simmons

September 15 - Workforce & Rates Subgroup

September 17 - WMHCA Board Retreat

September 20 - Rep. Tina Orwall

September 30 - CRIS Committee Meeting

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

Things are starting to really ramp up as we move into the Fall. Planning meetings with stakeholders, legislators, and committees are becoming more frequent and issues are narrowing down to potential bills, rule changes, etc.

WHMCA met with Rep. Tina Orwall to discuss the implementation of the 988 crisis line. We are going to be working with the legislators and stakeholders to offer our insight on how to make this crisis line as effective as possible. It is exciting to be involved in an issue that has such a large scale of exposure and will provide an immediate positive impact on those suffering a mental health crisis.

I have been regularly attending the rates/workforce subcommittee and have been actively participating in their discussions. The issue of supervision for licensure has come to the forefront of the priority list. This topic is complicated on many levels and there is concern that the workgroup is getting ahead of the providers. I will be meeting with NAMI, the LMFTs and the LCSWs to talk about how we can rein in the group and provide a reasonable and realistic solution to this issue. I will keep you apprised of the outcome of our meeting as we might need input from our members.

My goal for this month is to continue to taper down and pinpoint tangible solutions to the wide variety of issues that are floating around. There are so many problems and so many people working on them that it is almost getting out of control with "too many cooks in the kitchen." I am hoping to provide leadership and strong opinions to the many groups so we can unite to actually get something done in a realistic, timely, and reasonable manner.

### Meetings Requested

Rep. Leavitt (10/5)

Rep. Johnson (10/7)

Rep. Rule (10/14)

Rep. Taylor (10/19)

Jane Beyer - Senior Health Policy Advisor at Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner

Rep. Tarra Simmons

Sen. Dhingra (Chair, Behavioral Health Subcommittee)

Sen. Wagoner (Vice Chair, Behavioral Health Subcommittee)

### General Legislative News

With the date for mandatory vaccinations looming, there is a lot of worry about the potential loss and disturbance in the workforce. State workers are required to be vaccinated by October 18th. This has caused a great divide between the two parties - the vaccine is not the biggest point of concern, it's the issue of the mandate that are causing the disturbance.

The 2022 legislative session is likely to be virtual once again unless something drastic changes over the next month or two. They have already moved the November committee days to a virtual platform and although the idea of a "hybrid session" is being bounced around, that would mean that only legislators would be allowed in the building and the public/lobbying core would not.