

Lobbyist Report

Month December 2021



Meetings/Workgroups attended

- 12/2 - Health Care Provider Lobbyist Group Meeting
- 12/3 - Meeting to prep. for mental health advocacy panel
- 12/7 - Advocacy 101 - WMHCA presentation (by invitation)
- 12/7 - Advocacy 101 part 2
- 12/9 - Behavioral Health Coalition Meeting
- 12/16 - Behavioral Health Coalition Meeting
- 12/16 - Health Care Provider Lobbyist Group Meeting
- 12/21 - Rep. Rule - to discuss budget provisio for barriers to supervision legislation

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

With the 2022 just around the corner, December included many planning and strategy sessions with lobbyists and coalition/stakeholder groups. WMHCA has laid solid groundwork throughout the interim and by doing so, we feel ready to tackle the short (60 day) 2022 session. There will be many mental health related pieces of legislation and we feel ready to be of assistance to legislators as they move through the next few months.

During discussions over the interim with the Workforce and Rates subgroup, WMHCA was asked to be the lead on a bill to establish a workgroup to address the issues revolving around barriers to supervision. That has recently changed, and a budget provisio will now be the vehicle used to establish this workgroup. Representative Rule is the lead legislator on this strategy, and we have been advised by staff and others that due to a short session, with a limited amount of bills being able to be introduced, that a provisio would be the most efficient way to establish this workgroup. The intention is to establish a workgroup, consisting of behavioral health providers and other relevant parties to address the barriers to licensure specifically access to supervision. These workgroup members will be appointed by the entity who will be leading the group (either the HCA or DOH).

The Governor's budget was released <https://ofm.wa.gov/budget/state-budgets/gov-inslees-proposed-2019-21-budgets/agency-detail-budgets/300/030> and while there is a lot of funding included for improvements to the system, one disappointment was that he is only requesting a 4.5% increase in the Medicaid reimbursement rate. The rates and workforce subgroup had asked for a minimum of 7%. The Governor's budget is only a first draft as the House and Senate both write their own budgets and then negotiate back and forth until a compromise is agreed upon. In many discussions with the rates subgroup members, it has been expressed that finding an agreeable and reasonable increase to the rate will be a high priority this year.

All are encouraged to attend our "Lobby Day" which will be over two days, since we are going to have all virtual meetings. We have chosen February 1st and 2nd for our lobby days, and we encourage all members to participate. Please contact Shannon Thompson if you'd like to attend. I will coordinate meetings with your legislators, and we will also be having a training and discussion to help guide you through the meeting

process. This is a great way to participate in the process and to see first-hand how WMHCA is impacting the legislature.

Meetings Requested

Behavioral Health Subcommittee Members

House Health Care Members

Appropriations Leadership

Ways and Means Leadership

TBD Based on districts for those attending our Lobby Day.

General Legislative News

Session begins on Monday, January 10th and during this short 60-day session we can expect to see a lot of "clean up" from the 2021 session results. The session will once again be remote, but with the relationships we built over the interim, we feel confident about our abilities to lead and influence legislation as needed.

What's on the Horizon?

Lobby Day February 1 and 2

Sara Stewart

Melanie Stewart and Associates

HPC Advocacy

Cascade Government Affairs

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