



Protect the Quality and Safety of Care Provided at Hospitals (HB 1608)

Background

Legislation proposes to prohibit hospitals and health care facilities from appropriately managing the types and quality of services provided by health care providers. Hospitals are committed to providing patients with the right care at the right place and time. This includes providing both lifesaving emergency care and accurate, comprehensive information. The legislative proposal would negatively impact quality, safety, and cost of care.

WSHA Position

WSHA strongly supports health care providers giving patients medically accurate and comprehensive information about care options. WSHA opposes attempts to drastically limit the ability of health care facilities to plan health care services and standardize care. WSHA cannot support state law mandates that could lead to violations of other laws or compromises in the quality and safety of care.

Key Messages

- Hospitals and health care facilities require health care providers to abide by an array of standards in order to provide high quality, safe care in accordance with state and federal laws. Standards for appropriate referrals, scope of practice, and adherence to best practices improves health care delivery and makes care better and safer for everyone.
- Legislation that limits the ability to require providers to comply with credentialing and privileging requirements jeopardizes patient safety. Credentialing and privileging are the responsibility of the hospital and medical staff and crucial to establishing parameters of safe, quality care at the hospital. Credentialing determines which providers participate on a hospital's medical staff. The privileging process establishes the scope and capabilities of the provider.
- Existing federal law protects a patient's right to receive emergency care in every hospital. The federal Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) requires all hospitals to screen every patient who seeks emergency care and to stabilize or transfer those with medical emergencies. These obligations are strictly enforced by the federal government and individuals may sue a hospital for EMTALA violations.
- A facility may not be able to provide all aspects of care for every patient. In those cases, health care providers give patients information about locations that provide care and a referral, where possible and appropriate.

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