



April 27, 2015

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Governor, State of Washington
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

RE: Senate Bill 5084 – All Payer Claims Database

Dear Governor Inslee,

I am writing to respectfully ***urge you to sign Senate Bill 5084***, a bill to enhance the state's all payer claims database. The Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA) strongly supports the creation of an all payer claims database as a tool to improve quality and reduce costs of health care. While a database was created through legislation last year, the legislation had several components that made it largely inoperable. It did not mandate that all insurers submit their claims to the database and it had a requirement that significantly restricted reports that could be generated.

The current bill is a carefully constructed one that fixes the flaws in the current law. Sponsored by Senator Becker and amended by Representative Cody, it has the support of the major insurers, purchasers, and providers. During the legislative session, WSHA worked as part of the Coalition for Cost Transparency to introduce new legislation to fix the existing law. We also worked with the Washington State Medical Association, Premera, and Regence on a solution that provides added protection for data that could be used to identify specific contractual arrangements between insurers and providers. We were pleased to be a part of the collaborative work between the two houses to provide meaningful protection and security for patient data.

For WSHA and our members, we believe the new legislation will create a rich source of information to improve quality of care. It will allow hospitals and health systems to review the services they provide to specific types of patients compared to other providers in the state and help identify best practices.

While inpatient data has been available for many years from the Department of Health, health care has been increasingly moving to an outpatient setting. Data have been lacking on outpatient services. For example, when WSHA has studied potentially preventable emergency room services, we had to undertake expensive new special data collection with our members. Similarly, WSHA has been unable to review whether patients discharged from the hospital are

getting necessary follow-up visits from community physicians. The new database will allow support for such important examinations.

While WSHA will be restricted from getting claims data sets with the actual contracted payment amount, we can make requests of the lead agency to run reports showing aggregate payments by types of services and settings. Again, we think this will be a valuable tool as we and others in the state work to transform health care.

The bill enjoyed broad bipartisan support and passed the House and Senate with overwhelming majorities. Dr. Bob Crittenden was instrumental to negotiating the carefully constructed new language. We hope it will enjoy your support as well.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions. I can be reached at (206) 216-2538 or cassies@wsba.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cassie Sauer".

Cassie Sauer
Senior Vice President, Advocacy and Government Affairs