

**WSHA POLICY PRIORITIES
2015**

Mental Health (Support HB 1401/SB 5645). Advance policy changes to improve the mental health system that support integration of mental health and primary care, reduce barriers on hospitals to provide appropriate inpatient treatment, increase the supply of additional psychiatric professionals, and provide data and evaluation to use for system improvements.

Telemedicine (Support HB 1403/SB 5175). Advocate for telemedicine legislation to guarantee that if an insurer covers a clinical service on an in-person basis, they will also cover the same service if it is provided using video technology.

Mergers and Affiliations (Oppose HB 1870). Protect hospitals' ability to merge or form affiliations, in order to best serve their communities' needs and ensure hospital viability, without additional state barriers. Defend against legislative efforts to amend the Certificate of Need statute to require review.

Hospital Services (Oppose HB 1787/SB 5770). Preserve the ability of hospitals and hospital medical staff organizations to choose the services they provide to patients.

Nurse Staffing (Oppose HB 1732 and HB 1733/SB 5672). Ensure no laws are enacted that restrict hospitals' ability to staff according to patient needs. Oppose staffing ratios, meal and rest breaks regulations for nurses, and unreasonable limits on overtime or on-call staffing.

Pharmaceutical Dispensing (Support HB 1402/SB 5460). Allow hospitals to dispense pre-pack medications to provide necessary treatment in the short term when pharmacies are not open.

Work Force Flexibility (Support HB 1340). Create an optional pathway to enhance the existing sunrise review process by establishing a structured process to safely pilot and evaluate new or expanded roles for health care professionals or new health care delivery alternatives.

Suspect and Inmate Care (Support SB 5593). Protect workers and other patients by requiring adequate guarding by law enforcement of patients who are suspected or convicted of a violent or sexual crime. Ensure payments for care to inmates cover the cost of their care while giving law enforcement a predictable and fair payment schedule.

All-Payer Claims Database (Support HB 1437/SB 5084). Support efforts to include claims data from all Washington insurers -- not just Medicaid and state employees. Eliminate the requirement that prevents reports if more than 25 percent of the data comes from one insurer.

Crisis Standards of Care (Support HB 1944). In the case of a major, officially-declared emergency, provide liability relief if health care providers are unable to provide normal care delivery due to shortages of personnel or equipment.

Community Benefits (Support/Amend HB 1504; Oppose HB 1946). Educate legislators about benefits hospitals provide, continued need for charity care, and current and future substantial cuts in federal Medicare and Medicaid payments to support increased health insurance coverage.



**WSHA BUDGET PRIORITIES
2015**

Mental Health Funding. Provide sufficient funding to reduce or end psychiatric boarding for adults, adolescents and children in Washington State. Resources for psychiatric care should be statewide, should include state hospitals and community inpatient and outpatient services, and appropriate community support services. ***(\$62.9 million state and \$12.7 million federal; \$15 million capital)***

Hospital Safety Net Assessment Program. Support continuation through SFY 2019 with no decrease in benefits to the state or to hospitals. WSHA's support is contingent on the assessment not exceeding previous levels, the state maximizing federal funds, the majority of the increased benefit going to hospital Medicaid payment, a new sunset date in four years, and renewal of the contract preventing Medicaid payment cuts. The assessment program will generate ***\$140 million*** in additional new revenues for the state over the biennium.

Hospital-based Clinics. Ensure continued and adequate payment for hospital-based clinics to provide access to care for Medicaid enrollees. ***(\$21 million state and \$21 million federal)***

Loan Repayment. Provide funds for loan repayment to those serving in underserved areas, especially for expansion of mental health professionals. ***(\$8 million state)***

Medical Residencies. Provide funds to support additional residency training slots. ***(\$16 million state)***

Primary Care Payment. Increase the Medicaid payment rates for primary care practitioners and clinics to Medicare payment levels in order to improve access to care. ***(\$79 million state and \$157 million federal)***

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