WAADAC Legislative Report
March 15, 2025
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House of Origin cutoff…Wednesday, March 12th, marked the critical deadline for bills to advance out of their chambers of origin. With this milestone passed, legislative focus now shifts to the next phase: bills making their way across the rotunda to be considered by policy and fiscal committees in the opposite chamber.

Each floor cutoff day brings anticipation with one recurring question—what will be the "5 p.m. bill?" According to legislative rules, if the bill's process begins before the 5 p.m. deadline, discussions can continue well into the evening. This final bill of the day often carries symbolic weight. Sometimes, it's a contentious measure that sparks extended debate, stretching late into the night. Other times, it's a broadly supported, feel-good proposal—perhaps a resolution honoring a local hero, commemorating an historic event, or recognizing a cause that garners bipartisan backing. This year, we witnessed both types of bills.

This cutoff, the House 5pm bill was HB 1296 (Stonier, D-49), a hot-button student rights bill. The legislation proposes modifications to existing policies concerning student rights, parental rights, and employee protections within public schools and requires school districts to adopt or amend policies by January 31, 2026, to incorporate guidelines from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). These guidelines aim to eliminate discrimination based on gender expression and identity, address challenges faced by transgender students, and apply anti-bullying policies to these students.

The bill has elicited partisan responses. Republican legislators have expressed concerns that HB 1296 could undermine the "parents' bill of rights" initiative (Initiative 2081) passed in 2024. The bill was brought up shortly before the 5pm deadline and then not debated on until the middle of the night, with debate wrapping up at 2:15am. The bill passed on a party-line vote, with the adoption of 6 of 128 proposed amendments.

And in the Senate, the majority chose SB 5263 (Pedersen, D-43) as their 5pm bill. The bipartisan legislation, which passed 48-0, proposes several significant changes to special education funding to enhance support for students with disabilities. Debate was sometimes emotional, with several members on each side of the aisle speaking.

Budget considerations…All eyes will be on the state's revenue forecast release on Tuesday. Budget writers use this forecast to make final adjustments to their budgets. However, the uncertainty of the federal budget looms large, particularly potential cuts to Medicaid. This may make the March forecast a difficult predictor of the state's economy, with some already thinking that the June revenue forecast will show a more accurate picture of the state's budget challenges.

The Senate Democrats will release their budget on March 24th, with a hearing on March 25th. This budget will include a combination of billions of dollars in cuts, new revenue, and savings. The House is expected to release their budget around the same time, but it's unclear whether their revenue package will be included in their budget or announced later in session.

This week, Senate Republicans proposed an alternative budget aimed at tackling the state's multi-billion-dollar deficit without introducing new taxes. Their plan includes a $75.6 billion budget for the next two years, marking a 5% increase from the current cycle. Key strategies involve using surplus funds, pausing planned expansions for state-subsidized childcare, and forgoing approximately $4 billion in previously negotiated pay raises for state workers. Instead of these raises, they propose a one-time $5,000 bonus for employees. Senator Chris Gildon, the Republican budget lead, emphasized that this approach seeks a middle ground between cuts and tax increases. Democratic budget leaders have criticized the Republican proposal as "unsustainable." The state's projected budget deficit estimates vary, with figures ranging from $12 billion to over $18 billion.

WAADAC Bills of Interest

HB 1427 expands access to and training for **peer support specialists**. It passed the House on a vote of 85-11 and has been referred to the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee.

HB 1432 updates Washington's **mental health parity** law. It passed the House on a vote of 72-23 and has been referred to the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee. It was amended on the House floor as follows:

- Adds evidence-based clinical criteria to the list of valid, evidence-based sources establishing generally accepted standards of mental health and substance use disorder care.
- Modifies the provisions requiring health carriers to apply relevant age-appropriate patient placement criteria from nonprofit professional associations to service intensity or level of care placement, continued stay, or transfer or discharge.
- Removes provisions that add inpatient and residential mental health treatment services to the existing provisions that prohibit health plans from requiring enrollees obtain prior authorization before seeking these services and for the first two business days and also requiring a health plan to authorize at least 14 days of inpatient or residential care if the health plan authorizes inpatient or residential mental health services.
- Provides that nothing in the provision prohibiting health carriers from limiting benefits or coverage for medically necessary mental health and substance use disorder services on the basis that those services should or could be covered by a public entitlement program may be construed to require a carrier to cover benefits that have been authorized and provided for a covered person by a public entitlement program, except as otherwise required by state or federal law.
- Modifies the phrase "mental health services."
- Changes references to a health carrier's contracted entities for purposes of utilization management and prior authorization prohibitions for certain health services to a health care benefit manager.

HB 1574 expands **protections for a person seeking medical assistance for someone experiencing a drug-related overdose** or who experiences a drug-related overdose and needs medical assistance. This bill passed the House on a vote of 56-41. It's been referred to the Senate Law & Justice Committee. It was amended on the House floor as follows:

- Clarifies that the protections from arrest provided for persons seeking or needing medical assistance for a drug-related overdose are exceptions to the provisions that require arrest for

specified assault that involves domestic violence and violation of specified protection orders, no contact orders, and restraining orders.
- Removes the prohibition on detaining a person seeking or needing medical assistance for a drug-related overdose and adds language specifying that a peace officer is not prohibited from lawfully detaining such a person without making an arrest.
- Clarifies that the protections afforded persons seeking or needing medical assistance for a drug-related overdose from having their property subject to civil forfeiture or being penalized for specified violations only apply if the property that would be subject to civil forfeiture or the evidence for the possible charge of such a violation was obtained as a result of the overdose and the need for medical assistance.
- Provides immunity from liability, including from revocation of certification, for peace officers and their employing agencies for any conduct taken or policy adopted in compliance with the provisions affording certain protections to a person seeking medical assistance for a drug-related overdose, unless such action or inaction is taken in bad faith or with deliberate indifference or gross negligence.
- Removes the exemption for clients of public health and syringe service programs from arrest and prosecution for taking samples of substances and using drug testing equipment to analyze or detect substances.
- Removes the provision modifying the state preemption of drug paraphernalia regulation which, in the underlying bill, eliminates the existing carveout for city or county laws or ordinances related to the establishment or regulation of harm reduction services concerning drug paraphernalia.

HB 1686, the bill creating a **health care entity registry,** passed the House on a vote of 86-7 and is scheduled for a hearing on Tuesday in the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee. The bill was amended considerably on the House floor. It's now a study bill, requiring the Department of Health (DOH) to develop a plan and recommendations regarding the creation of a complete and interactive registry.

HB 1813, concerning the **reprocurement of medical assistance services**, including the realignment of behavioral health crisis services for Medicaid enrollees, passed the House on a vote of 79-16. It's been referred to the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee. It was amended on the House floor as follows:

- Replaces the Health Care Authority's review of service delivery models within each behavioral health administrative services organization (BHASO) with a requirement that the Authority consult with the Office of the Insurance Commissioner, the Department of Health, and stakeholders, to develop a base model of crisis service delivery that should exist in every region.
- Requires the model to include the minimum number and type of crisis services, regardless of population size, and how to scale the model for larger regions.
- Requires that the operation of the regional behavioral health crisis hotline be consistent with the 988 system and include tribal and Indian health care provider crisis services.
- Requires that the development of reserve thresholds for BHASOs consider service utilization, crisis system operations, and crisis service needs.
- Requires BHASOs and managed care organizations (MCOs) to implement electronic care coordination data sharing standards that are consistent across regions by January 1, 2026. Requires BHASOs to electronically submit encounter documentation and claims information to payers for crisis services beginning January 1, 2027.

SB 5361, the bill to **delay the use of the ASAM 4 criteria**, treatment criteria for addictive, substance related, and co-occurring conditions, passed the Senate with a vote of 47-2. It's scheduled for a hearing in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on Tuesday.

Bills that did not survive the House of Origin cutoff deadline include:

- HB 1155, the bill that **prohibits non-compete agreements**
- HB 1392, the bill that creates the Medicaid Access Program to **increase Medicaid reimbursement rates**
- SB 5290, the bill that permits individuals charged with possession of drugs to seek a **dismissal of the charge** by successfully completing court approved treatment
- SB 5387, the **corporate practice of health care** bill

Upcoming Hearings

Health & Long-Term Care (Senate) - SHR 4 and Virtual - 3/18 @ 10:30am

• SHB 1811 - Public Hearing - Enhancing crisis response services through co-response integration and support. (Remote Testimony Available).

• E2SHB 1686 - Public Hearing - Creating a health care entity registry. (Remote Testimony Available).

• HB 1234 - Exec Session - Concerning the mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers advisory committee.

Health Care & Wellness (House) - HHR A and Virtual JLOB - 3/18 @ 1:30pm

• SB 5361 - Public Hearing - Delaying the use of the ASAM 4 criteria, treatment criteria for addictive, substance related, and co-occurring conditions. (Remote Testimony Available). (High)

Consumer Protection & Business (House) - HHR B and Virtual JLOB - 3/19 @ 1:30pm

• SSB 5331 - Public Hearing - Strengthening consumer protection through increased insurer accountability for violations of the insurance code. (Remote Testimony Available).

Health Care & Wellness (House) - HHR A and Virtual JLOB - 3/19 @ 1:30pm

• SSB 5568 - Exec Session - Updating and modernizing the Washington state health plan.

Appropriations (House) - HHR A and Virtual JLOB - 3/19 @ 4:00pm

• E2SSB 5083 - Public Hearing - Ensuring access to primary care, behavioral health, and affordable hospital services. (Remote Testimony Available).

Community Safety (House) - HHR D and Virtual JLOB - 3/20 @ 8:00am

• SSB 5388 - Public Hearing - Concerning department of corrections behavioral health certification. (Remote Testimony Available).

Health & Long-Term Care (Senate) - SHR 4 and Virtual - 3/20 @ 8:00am

• EHB 1382 - Public Hearing - Modernizing the all payers claim database. (Remote Testimony Available).

• ESHB 1718 - Public Hearing - Concerning well-being programs for certain health care professionals. (Remote Testimony Available).

Early Learning & K-12 Education (Senate) - SHR 1 and Virtual J.A. Cherberg - 3/20 @ 10:30am

• ESHB 1296 - Public Hearing - Promoting a safe and supportive public education system. (Remote Testimony Available).

Important Dates:
Wednesday, April 2 - Policy Committee Cutoff, Opposite House
Tuesday, April 8 - Fiscal Committee Cutoff, Opposite House
Wednesday, April 16 - Opposite House Floor Cutoff

High Priority Bills

Bill Details		Status	Sponsor	Position
2SHB 1427	**Peer support specialists** Concerning certified peer support specialists.	S Health & Long-T	Davis	
E2SHB 1432 (SB 5477)	**Mental health services** Improving access to appropriate mental health and substance use disorder services.	S Health & Long-T	Simmons	
SB 5361 (HB 1469)	**ASAM 4 treatment criteria** Delaying the use of the ASAM 4 criteria, treatment criteria for addictive, substance related, and co-occurring conditions.	H HC/Wellness	Dhingra	

Monitoring Bills

Bill Details		Status	Sponsor	Position
HB 1198 (SB 5167)	**Operating budget** Making 2025-2027 fiscal biennium operating appropriations.	H Approps	Ormsby	
HB 1234 (SB 5449)	**Counselors, etc. committee** Concerning the mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers advisory committee.	S Health & Long-T	Simmons	
ESHB 1296	**Public education system** Promoting a safe and supportive public education system.	S EL/K-12	Stonier	
SHB 1308 (SB 5345)	**Access to personnel records** Concerning access to personnel records.	S Labor & Comm	Reed	
HB 1320	**Business & occupation tax** Modifying business and occupation tax rates to fund programs and services to benefit Washingtonians.	H Finance	Street	
EHB 1382	**All payers claim database** Modernizing the all payers claim database.	S Health & Long-T	Tharinger	
EHB 1574	**Substance use/care, services** Protecting access to life-saving care and substance use services.	S Law & Justice	Macri	
E2SHB 1589 (SB 5588)	**Health carriers & providers** Concerning the relationships between health carriers and contracting providers.	S Health & Long-T	Bronoske	

E2SHB 1686 (SB 5561)	**Health care entity registry** Creating a health care entity registry.	S Health & Long-T	Bronoske
ESHB 1718	**Health care prof. well-being** Concerning well-being programs for certain health care professionals.	S Health & Long-T	Thai
SHB 1811	**Crisis co-response** Enhancing crisis response services through co-response integration and support.	S Health & Long-T	Salahuddin
E2SHB 1813	**Medical assist reprocurement** Concerning the reprocurement of medical assistance services, including the realignment of behavioral health crisis services for medicaid enrollees.	S Health & Long-T	Macri
E2SSB 5083 (SHB 1123)	**Health carrier reimbursement** Ensuring access to primary care, behavioral health, and affordable hospital services.	H Approps	Robinson
SB 5167 (HB 1198)	**Operating budget** Making 2025-2027 fiscal biennium operating appropriations.	S Ways & Means	Robinson
SSB 5331 (HB 1199)	**Insurance code violations** Strengthening consumer protection through increased insurer accountability for violations of the insurance code.	H ConsPro&Bus	Cortes
SSB 5388	**DOC behavioral health cert.** Concerning department of corrections behavioral health certification.	H Community Safet	Dhingra
SSB 5568	**State health plan** Updating and modernizing the Washington state health plan.	H HC/Wellness	Cleveland

Dead Bills

Bill Details		Status	Sponsor	Position
SHB 1123 (E2SSB 5083)	**Health carrier reimbursement** Ensuring access to primary care, behavioral health, and affordable hospital services.	H Rules R	Macri	
HB 1124 (SSB 5112)	**Prescribing psychologists** Establishing a prescribing psychologist certification in Washington state.	H HC/Wellness	Simmons	
SHB 1155 (SB 5437)	**Noncompetition agreements** Prohibiting noncompetition agreements and clarifying nonsolicitation agreements.	H 2nd Reading	Berry	
HB 1199 (SSB 5331)	**Insurance code violations** Strengthening consumer protection through increased insurer accountability for violations of the insurance code.	H ConsPro&Bus	Taylor	

HB 1225	**Budgeting process** Reforming the Washington state budgeting process through requiring prioritized spending on essential state functions, placing limitations on state spending and revenue proposals, and requiring accountability for every dollar spent within the state budget.	H Approps	Couture	
HB 1259	**Behavioral health/schools** Concerning supervision requirements for behavioral health professionals in elementary and secondary public schools.	H Postsec Ed & W	Shavers	Support
HB 1262 (SB 5228)	**Health disparities council** Updating the governor's interagency coordinating council on health disparities.	H 2nd Reading	Santos	
SHB 1392 (SB 5372)	**Medicaid access program** Creating the medicaid access program.	H 2nd Reading	Macri	
HB 1413	**Opioid reversal purchasing** Prohibiting government purchases of opioid overdose reversal medications from certain entities.	H HC/Wellness	Reeves	
2SHB 1422	**Drug take-back program** Modifying the drug take-back program.	H Rules R	Peterson	
HB 1425	**Pharmacogenomic testing** Requiring coverage of pharmacogenomic testing for psychotropic medications.	H HC/Wellness	Davis	
HB 1433 (SB 5201)	**Psychedelic substances** Concerning access to psychedelic substances.	H HC/Wellness	Macri	
HB 1445 (SB 5233)	**Washington health trust** Developing the Washington health trust.	H HC/Wellness	Parshley	
HB 1451	**SVP civil commitment** Concerning civil commitment of sexually violent predators.	H Community Safe	Griffey	
HB 1469 (SB 5361)	**ASAM 4 treatment criteria** Delaying the use of the ASAM 4 criteria, treatment criteria for addictive, substance related, and co-occurring conditions.	H HC/Wellness	Macri	
HB 1496 (SSB 5254)	**Health care information** Strengthening patients' rights regarding their health care information.	H HC/Wellness	Berry	
HB 1502	**Behavioral health teaching** Establishing a behavioral health teaching clinic designation and enhancement rate.	H HC/Wellness	Rule	
HB 1507	**Health care nondisclosure** Limiting health care nondisclosure agreements.	H Civil R & Judi	Scott	
HB 1520 (SB 5513)	**Pharmacist scope of practice**	H HC/Wellness	Thai	

	Expanding pharmacists' scope of practice to improve access to health care and the management of chronic diseases.		
HB 1547 **(SB 5126)**	**Student mental health net.** Establishing a statewide network for student mental and behavioral health.	H Education	Santos
SHB 1566 **(SSB 5395)**	**Prior authorization/health** Making improvements to transparency and accountability in the prior authorization determination process.	H Approps	Rule
HB 1581	**988 line tax** Increasing the statewide 988 behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention line tax.	H Finance	Macri
SHB 1634	**Behavioral health/schools** Providing school districts and public schools with assistance to coordinate comprehensive behavioral health supports for students.	H Approps	Thai
HB 1663 **(SSB 5369)**	**Youth mental health/schools** Enhancing youth mental health and well-being through advanced training and expansion of the workforce in schools.	H Education	Rule
HB 1675 **(2SSB 5387)**	**Corp. practice of medicine** Concerning the corporate practice of medicine.	H HC/Wellness	Thai
HB 1787	**Substance use/commitment** Updating the involuntary treatment commitment standards for individuals suffering from a substance use disorder.	H Civil R & Judi	Griffey
HB 1809	**Behavioral health response** Professionalizing first responders and co-responders through training and reimbursement for behavioral health emergency response.	H HC/Wellness	Nance
HB 1933	**Overdose information** Providing universal access to overdose information to law enforcement and emergency services providers.	H HC/Wellness	Manjarrez
HB 1957	**Health plan rate approval** Providing consistency in the rate approval process for individual and small group market health plans.	H HC/Wellness	Schmick
HB 1968	**Controlled sub. endangerment** Concerning endangerment with a controlled substance.	H Community Safe	Rule
SHB 1996	**Behavioral health diversion** Authorizing a qualified county to impose a tax for the funding of behavioral health diversion from the criminal justice system.	H Rules R	Farivar
HB 2001	**Sunsetting state entities**	H State Govt & Tr	Dufault

	Sunsetting all nonconstitutionally mandated state agencies, commissions, boards, task forces, work groups, and councils every 10 years absent affirmative reestablishment by the legislature.		
SSB 5031	**Confinement health coord.** Concerning health care coordination regarding confined individuals.	S Ways & Means	Wilson
SSB 5112 **(HB 1124)**	**Prescribing psychologists** Establishing a prescribing psychologist certification in Washington state.	S 2nd Reading	Bateman
SB 5126 **(HB 1547)**	**Student mental health net.** Establishing a statewide network for student mental and behavioral health.	S EL/K-12	Nobles
SB 5201 **(HB 1433)**	**Psychedelic substances** Concerning access to psychedelic substances.	S Labor & Comm	Salomon
SB 5204	**Ibogaine-assisted therapy** Concerning ibogaine-assisted therapy.	S Health & Long-	Salomon
SB 5213	**Fentanyl possession** Penalizing the possession of fentanyl.	S Law & Justice	McCune
SB 5228 **(HB 1262)**	**Health disparities council** Updating the governor's interagency coordinating council on health disparities.	S Health & Long-	Riccelli
SSB 5229	**Opioid overdose/civil commit** Facilitating civil commitment for treatment for a person requiring revival by opioid overdose reversal medication.	S Ways & Means	Wagoner
SB 5233 **(HB 1445)**	**Washington health trust** Developing the Washington health trust.	S Health & Long-	Hasegawa
SB 5242	**Behavioral health resources** Establishing an interactive screening program to improve access to behavioral health resources for health care providers.	S Health & Long-	Orwall
SSB 5254 **(HB 1496)**	**Health care information** Strengthening patients' rights regarding their health care information.	S Ways & Means	Orwall
SSB 5290	**Controlled subs. dismissal** Allowing persons who complete substance abuse programs to seek dismissal of certain controlled substance related charges.	S 2nd Reading	Salomon
SSB 5324 **(SHB 1706)**	**Prior auth. APIs/health** Aligning the implementation of application programming interfaces for prior authorization with federal guidelines.	S 2nd Reading	Cleveland
SB 5345 **(SHB 1308)**	**Access to personnel records** Concerning access to personnel records.	S Labor & Comm	Saldana

SSB 5369 (HB 1663)	**Youth mental health/schools**	S Ways & Means	Orwall
	Enhancing youth mental health and well-being through advanced training and expansion of the workforce in schools.		
SB 5372 (SHB 1392)	**Medicaid access program**	S Health & Long-	Riccelli
	Creating the medicaid access program.		
2SSB 5387 (HB 1675)	**Corp practice of health care**	S Rules 2	Robinson
	Concerning the corporate practice of health care.		
SSB 5395 (SHB 1566)	**Prior authorization/health**	S Ways & Means	Orwall
	Making improvements to transparency and accountability in the prior authorization determination process.		
SB 5424	**UW health sciences campus**	S Higher Ed & Wo	Braun
	Establishing a health sciences campus of the University of Washington.		
SB 5437 (SHB 1155)	**Noncompetition agreements**	S Labor & Comm	Stanford
	Prohibiting noncompetition agreements and clarifying nonsolicitation agreements.		
SB 5449 (HB 1234)	**Counselors, etc. committee**	S Health & Long-	Slatter
	Concerning the mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers advisory committee.		
SB 5452	**Psychiatric pharmacists**	S Health & Long-	Slatter
	Allowing board-certified psychiatric pharmacists to be licensed as agency-affiliated counselors.		
SB 5477 (E2SHB 1432)	**Mental health services**	S Health & Long-T	Bateman
	Improving access to appropriate mental health and substance use disorder services.		
SB 5481	**Behavioral health/schools**	S Health & Long-T	Wilson
	Providing access to behavioral health services to children using licensed clinicians colocated within the school.		
SB 5513 (HB 1520)	**Pharmacist scope of practice**	S Health & Long-	Slatter
	Expanding pharmacists' scope of practice to improve access to health care and the management of chronic diseases.		
SB 5561 (E2SHB 1686)	**Health care entity registry**	S Health & Long-	Cleveland
	Creating a health care entity registry.		
SB 5588 (E2SHB 1589)	**Health carriers & providers**	S Health & Long-T	Cleveland
	Concerning the relationships between health carriers and contracting providers.		
SB 5666	**Mental health internships**	S Higher Ed & Wo	Slatter
	Establishing a public school-based mental health internship grant program.		

SSB 5683	**Health carrier payment times** Concerning health carrier transparency of payment timeliness of claims submitted by health care providers and health care facilities.	S Ways & Means	Slatter
SB 5762	**988 line tax** Increasing the statewide 988 behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention line tax.	S Ways & Means	Orwall
SB 5765	**Psychiatric pharmacists** Concerning psychiatric pharmacists.	S Health & Long-	Slatter