



February 3, 2023

This Week in Olympia

We have just finished up week four of the legislative session. The theme of the week's hearing was workforce. There were several hearings on bills that address the nursing shortage in Washington all of which provided a platform for meaningful discussion on the topic. With so much attention on the healthcare workforce crisis, legislators are primed to act. We are hopeful to see a number of these policies and budget requests continue to move forward.

Bills to monitor impacting LTC

Support

[SB 5526/ HB 1571](#)- Concerning nursing facility rates. The Senate version of the bill (SB 5526) is scheduled for a public hearing on February 9th at 10:30 am in the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee.

[SB 5547](#)- Concerning nursing pool transparency. This bill is scheduled for a public hearing on February 10th at 8:00 am in the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee.

[SB 5499](#)- Multistate nurse licensure compact. This bill is scheduled for a public

hearing on February 10th at 8:00 am in the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee. This is not a companion bill to 1417 and has some additional items that were negotiated with stakeholders. It will likely be the preferred bill.

For the above three bills, we are asking members to get involved by either signing in pro for each of the bills or testifying to describe the urgent need for these bills to become law. Simply signing in support of a bill demonstrates the broad support and importance of the policies outlined in these bills. Testimony can be offered over zoom now. Many of you have important stories to tell on the impacts of nurse staffing agencies or inadequate Medicaid rates for skilled nursing facilities. Or, even on the shortage of nurses in long term care and why our state should join the Multistate Nurse Licensure Compact, as nearly 40 other states have to address the urgent need for critical nursing care. If you have interest in testifying on a particular bill, please reach out and let me know.

If you would like to show support and sign in pro for the bill you can do so on the [Senate Committee Sign In](#) page. In the drop-down Committee menu, select Health & Long-Term Care. Under the meeting drop down menu, select 2/09/23 10:30 am for the skilled nursing facility rates bill. Or 2/10/23 8:00 am for the nursing pool transparency or nurse licensure compact bill. When you click on the bill title it will give you four options to participate, one is **I would like my position noted for the legislative record**. Select that option and fill in your information.

[SB 5498- Creating the hospital-based nurse student loan repayment assistance program under the Washington health corps](#). This bill would establish the Nurse Loan Repayment Assistance Program under the Washington Health Corps for nurses at participating employers. A participating employer is one that has elected to participate in the program, and is one of the following:

- a hospital
- a psychiatric hospital
- a nursing home
- an assisted living facility
- an ambulatory surgical facility
- an enhanced services facility
- a federally qualified health center
- a school-based health center

Participating employers are responsible for 50 percent of the loan repayments funded under the program. Nurses must work fulltime and for a minimum of three years to be eligible. The maximum award duration is five years.

We believe student loan repayment would provide a great incentive for already trained nurses to come work in Washington hospitals and long-term care facilities.

The first public hearing was February 1st in the Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development.

SB 5582- Reducing barriers and expanding educational opportunities to increase the supply of nurses in Washington. The intent of this bill is to increase the supply of nurses in Washington and seeks to reduce barriers and expand educational opportunities. Some of the specific provisions are:

- Requires the state board for community and technical colleges to develop a plan to increase credential opportunities in nursing.
- Creates nursing education opportunities at community and technical colleges and within the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Modifies program approval and training requirements under the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission.
- Creates the High School Student Certified Nursing Assistant Pilot Program.

It was also up for public hearing on February 1st in the Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development.

HB 1431- Clarifying that meals furnished to tenants of senior living communities as part of their rental agreement are not subject to sales and use tax. This bill had its first public hearing in the House Committee on Finance on February 2nd at 1:30 pm. A few long-term care providers and residents came to Olympia to testify in support of the bill. The Department of Revenue also testified stating their position as “neutral” and not opposed to the concept of exempting meals from the tax but with technical corrections. We expect this bill to be amended, assuming it passes out of committee.

SB 5183/ HB 1128- Raising the Residential Personal Needs Allowance. Both bills were passed out of their original committees and are companion bills.

SB 5202/ HB 1149- Reducing homelessness in Washington state through capital expenditures for programs that address housing insecurity. Both bills are still waiting to be scheduled for an executive session which is necessary for the bills to continue to move through the process. We continue to advocate for affordable senior housing to be included as a priority in the state’s plan to address housing insecurity.

HB 1417- Concerning the multistate nurse licensure compact. This bill had its first public hearing in the House Committee on Postsecondary Education & Workforce on February 2nd at 8:00 am.

SB 5278- Implementing audit recommendations to reduce barriers to home care aide certification. This bill is waiting to be scheduled for executive action.

Neutral

SB 5640- Establishing an independent living residents' rights work group. This bill just dropped a few days ago and would create a work group that would recommend to the governor and the legislature a bill of rights for nonresidents residing in an assisted living facility that allows the nonresidents to have a process to resolve disputes regarding contracted services with the owners and management of the assisted living facility in which they reside. LeadingAge Washington is neutral on this bill and will seek active involvement in the workgroup in an effort to ensure reasonable protections are brought forward.

Oppose

SB 5217- Concerning the state's ability to regulate certain industries and risk classes to prevent musculoskeletal injuries and disorders. This bill is waiting to be scheduled for executive action.

SB 5236- Concerning hospital staffing standards. This bill is waiting to be scheduled for executive action.

Questions? Contact:

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