

2023 Legislative Summary



WASHINGTON
**Medical
Commission**
Licensing. Accountability. Leadership.

What a Practitioner Needs to Know

Micah Matthews, WMC Deputy Executive and Legislative Director

Washington Medical Commission (WMC) was hard at work this year for the return to in-person legislative session for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Due to the toned-down nature of two prior virtual sessions, legislators hit the ground running with a deluge of early pre-filed bills.

Here is a recap of the new laws that practitioners should be aware of:

HB 1009-Military Spouses

This law requires the WMC to establish procedures that expedite the issuance of a medical license to a military spouse. The expedited licensing should begin in 2024. Rulemaking is required and some legal hurdles remain. Until then, the [WMC temporary practice permit](#) standards are in place. It should also be noted that Congress passed a law in this area as well, which instructs states to issue licenses to military personnel if they have a license in another state and deployment orders. Notably, if there is a health profession compact pathway available, the federal law requires the applicant to use the compact.

HB 1340-Health Professions, Disciplinary Authorities

This law clarifies that providing reproductive services (such as a medicinal or surgical abortion) and gender affirming care does not constitute [“unprofessional conduct” under Uniform Disciplinary Act](#) (UDA). Nor does conviction or disciplinary action based on a health care provider’s violation of another state’s laws prohibiting participation in these services constitute “unprofessional conduct.” Therefore, these services are protected in Washington state if they meet the standard of care.

HB 1469-Health Care Services

This law provides a legal shield for those seeking and providing reproductive services (such as a medicinal or surgical abortion) and gender affirming care. The State Attorney General may bring action against those violating the act and recover costs. This bill along with HB 1340 constitutes the bulk of state efforts to protect reproductive rights. They impact all license types except the Medical Compact Licenses

(IMLC). Risk mitigation efforts for IMLC holders are underway free of charge, which should launch in July.

SB 5036-Concerning Telemedicine

This law extends the timeline, for which an interactive remote appointment may substitute for an in-person appointment for the purposes of reimbursement using audio-only telemedicine, by six-months.

SB 5120- Establishing crisis relief centers in Washington state

This law creates 23-hour crisis relief centers as a new category of behavioral health facility to provide services to voluntary clients, people brought in by first responders, and clients referred by the 988 hotline. This law aims to reduce barriers that require practitioners to give medical clearance or turn away patients due to exclusionary criteria for behavioral health facilities.

SB 5179-Death with Dignity (update)

In 2008, WA voters approved Initiative 1000, which established The Death with Dignity Act. This bill expands authorization for health care providers who perform the duties of the act to include advanced registered nurse practitioners and physician assistants. The Department of Health (DOH) has a webpage to answer questions about the [Death with Dignity Act](#).

SB 5389-Concerning the practice of optometry

This law expands the scope of optometrists after a lengthy [Sunrise Review](#) from the DOH. The law requires that those wishing to expand their scope must receive an endorsement, which has several requirements, including entering into an agreement with a qualified physician for rapid response if complications occur. Based on changes to this law the WMC will be considering an interpretive statement to define “qualified physician”.

2023 Legislative Summary

SB 5394-Malpractice Insurance Requirements for IMG Supervisors

This law removes the malpractice coverage requirement in law for those MDs who supervise a [Clinical Experience License](#) holder. We hope this will greatly expand the utilization of these licensees in more settings.

SB 5453-Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

This law formally makes the practice of FGM grounds for "[unprofessional conduct](#)" in the UDA and includes FGM in the definition of child "abuse or neglect" that must be reported by a mandatory reporter. The DOH will establish an education program to prevent female genital mutilation and WMC will share the educational program.

2023 WMC Public Meeting Dates

WMC Meeting Type	Date & Time	Location	More Information
Policy: Interested Parties	June 30 10 am – 11 am	Virtual	Meeting Page
Policy Committee	July 5 4 pm – 5 pm	Virtual	Registration
Personal Appearances	July 13 2 pm – 5 pm	Capitol Event Center (ESD 113) 6005 Tyee Drive SW, Tumwater, WA	Registration
Business Meeting	July 14 8 am – 9:30 am	Capitol Event Center (ESD 113) 6005 Tyee Drive SW, Tumwater, WA	Registration
Personal Appearances	August 24 2 pm – 5 pm	Capitol Event Center (ESD 113) 6005 Tyee Drive SW, Tumwater, WA	Events Calendar
Policy: Interested Parties	September 29 10 am – 11 am	Virtual	Events Calendar
Commissioner Retreat	October 6 Time: TBD	Capitol Event Center (ESD 113) 6005 Tyee Drive SW, Tumwater, WA	Events Calendar
Policy Committee	October 13 10 am – 11 am	Virtual	Events Calendar
Business Meeting	October 20 9 am – 11 am	Virtual	Events Calendar
Personal Appearances	November 16 2 pm – 5 pm	Capitol Event Center (ESD 113) 6005 Tyee Drive SW, Tumwater, WA	Events Calendar
Policy: Interested Parties	December 8 10 am – 11 am	Virtual	Events Calendar
Additional Events can be found on our Meetings Page and Events Calendar			