

## Major Bills advocated for:

[Senate Bill 5377](#) authorized subsidies for the ACA exchanges for people making less than 250% of the federal poverty line (FPL) which will bring down premiums for an estimated 95,000 Washingtonians who currently pay on average \$450/mo. for health insurance, reducing that premium payment down to an average of \$50/mo. The Health Benefit Exchange requested and received approved funding for Cascade Care: \$58.01m FY21-22, matching FY22-23. Effective: 7/25/2021

[House Bill 1196](#) requires health carriers to reimburse for audio-only telehealth. As we've seen during the pandemic, telehealth is a safe and easy way for people to get medical advice without having to travel to their provider's office. Audio-only telehealth is an option that allows those without a computer or broadband access to easily talk to a doctor and get medical advice quickly. Effective: 7/25/2021  
News: State of Reform [Governor signs Riccelli bill to expand access to audio-only telehealth](#) 5.4.2021

## Additional Bills supported:

[Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1086](#) creates the State Office of Behavioral Health Consumer Advocacy to establish statewide rules, standards, and procedures for behavioral health consumer advocacy services. Funding provided addresses expected increases in complaint investigation and discipline. The legislature funded the start-up and program for FY21-22 at \$1.4m. Effective: 7/25/2021

[House Bill 1218](#) strengthens protections for long-term care residents by establishing minimum communication requirements, so facilities are responsive to calls from families, and establishes a right to visitation. It will also make residents safer during emergencies by requiring things like comprehensive disaster preparedness plans. Effective: 7/25/2021

[House Bill 1096](#) preserves the WA State health insurance pool for high cost, chronic patients across the state. Removing the expiration date for non-Medicare coverage provided through Washington State Health Insurance Pool ([WSHIP](#)) will ensure continued coverage for medically fragile enrollees and preserve an important safety net. This coverage is available for people with high costs who are unable to get other insurance. These people frequently are medically fragile because of HIV-AIDS, kidney disease, and cancer. Effective: 7/25/2021

[House Bill 1336](#) authorizes and represents a crucial policy shift that addresses economic, education, healthcare, and equity issues. There is currently an inequitable arrangement where people in more populated areas have high speed Internet and rural areas do not. It is not profitable for private companies to provide the service in the underserved or unserved areas. This bill now allows for municipalities and Public Utility Districts to provide high-speed broadband internet. This has been successful in many other states in getting this necessary utility to consumers. Signed: 5/13/2021

[Senate Bill 5423](#) allows a licensed out-of-state practitioner, including osteopathic physicians, to consult through telemedicine, or by other means, with a practitioner licensed in Washington State regarding the diagnosis or treatment of a patient within Washington State. Effective: 7/25/2021

**Bills opposed:**

[House Bill 1197 KILLED/DIED](#), (MS Society OPPOSE) The MS Society advocated AGAINST this bill which would have improperly altered the guardianship statutes related to persons authorized to make health care decisions on behalf of another. While the intent of giving constituents more options and flexibility in choosing decision makers is good, the bill language presented a host of issues related to competency, liability, and the guardianship statutes. The MS Society and the WA Bar Association Elder Law division opposed this bill and successfully got it tabled for the session.