

PLEASE SUPPORT HB 1655/SB 6161: CONCERNING PROVIDER CONTRACT COMPENSATION

Requires provider compensation increases commensurate with consumer price index increases for contracts between a health carrier and a health care provider who is not employed or affiliated with a hospital or large hospital system.

PROBLEM

- Independent private practice healthcare providers are struggling to survive. The costs to operate and maintain a healthcare practice continue to rise due to increased labor costs and costs associated with electronic health records, prior authorization, etc.
- Health carrier compensation to providers has been either stagnant or has decreased. The result is that increasing numbers of healthcare providers are closing their practices, and some are leaving their profession entirely. This trend is troublesome for consumers' access to health care.
- Negotiation between the carrier and the provider is non-existent. If the provider declines to work for the low fee, they decline the entire agreement and are no longer part of the provider network – without negotiation.
- CPI-U has had a 20% increase in inflation since 2019, but provider fee schedules do not reflect inflation.

GOALS

- Increase access to care
- Remove economic barriers to entering the profession
- Increase quality of care and help prevent burnout
- Minimize service gaps
- Attract and retain providers

Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners United | American Massage Therapy Association - WA Chapter | APTA Washington | ARNP's United | Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses | National Association of Social Workers - WA Chapter | Optometric Physicians of Washington | The Washington Association of Nurse Anesthetists | Washington Occupational Therapy Association | Washington Academy of Physician Assistants | Washington Acupuncture and Eastern Medicine Association | Washington Occupational Therapy Association | Washington Association of Naturopathic Physicians | Washington State Podiatric Medical Association | Washington Mental Health Counselors Association | Washington Speech-Language-Hearing Association | Washington State Chiropractic Association | Washington State Dental Association | Washington State Psychological Association

HB 1655 and SB 6161 take a small step toward ensuring patient access to independent healthcare providers not connected with a hospital by requiring health carriers to increase provider compensation annually based on the consumer price index (CPI-U).