

HEALTH CARE ADVOCACY  
2026 Session Recap & Looking Ahead

POLITICS & POLICY with  
Katie Kolan, JD

1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Overview

It was a 60-day legislative session (short session)

- Started January 12 and adjourned on March 12
- Supplemental Budget Year
- State and Federal issues interplay (fiscal, AI issues, healthcare, other...)

2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

2026 Legislative Session – Overview Control

Democrats have control of both houses, the Governor's office, and hold all nine statewide executive offices.


Senate (49)

● Ds (30) ● Rs (19)



House (98)

● Ds (59) ● Rs (39)



3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Overall, the legislature passed just 709 bills during the combined 2025-26 biennial session, a significant drop from the 877 passed in 2023-24.



4

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Budget Overview

Lawmakers finalized an **\$80.2 billion** supplemental operating budget, which represented a nearly 3% increase from the original 2025 biennial budget.

- State spending? **UP**
- State revenue? **DOWN**
- Factors:
  - A better revenue forecast than expected helped; and
  - ~\$800m in transfers (rainy day fund) patched other holes
  - Need to spend to comply with H.R.1
  - Increased tort exposure to state (**\$1b** this year)



5

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Healthcare Budget

Some significant healthcare related items in the final budget included:

- Funds to continue premium assistance for Washingtonians purchasing insurance through the Washington Health Benefit Exchange. (\$25 million total funds)
- Caseload reduction and moving from managed care to fee-for-service in the Apple Health Expansion program for undocumented residents of Washington State. (\$30.6 million state, \$32.8 million in savings total.)
- Significant funding to address impacts of federal changes to Medicaid eligibility and the eligibility verification process due to HR 1 for work requirements. (\$2.5 million state, \$14.6 million total)



6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Healthcare Budget Priorities

- Defense against cuts
- H.R.1 Response
  - Access to health care services, coverage for all state residents
- Medicaid reimbursement and access
  - 2025 HB 1392 – Medicaid Access Program
  - HR blocked implementation; need remains
  - Extend MAP statutory timelines
  - Alternate pathway for rate increases
- B&O tax
  - 40% rate increase for physician orgs, other HC not tenable
  - Opportunities to mitigate

7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Budget Revenue Bills

Various revenue bills were introduced or carried over from 2025:

- Statewide payroll tax, SB 2100 - **died**
- Wealth tax, SB 5797 - **died**
- Tobacco tax, HB 1416 - **died**
- Walmart/"fair share" tax, SB 6173 - **died**
- Taxes on loan interest, HB 2089 - **passed**
- Timber tax distributions, SB 5994 - **passed**
- B&O Tax Modernization, SB 6228 - **passed**
- Data Center Tax Change, SB 6231 - **passed**
- Insurance Tax Clarification, HB 2487 - **passed**
- Millionaires' tax - more on this next slide...

8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – The Big Revenue Bill

- Millionaires' income tax, SB 6346 - **passed**
  - 9.9% tax on income > \$4M (individuals / spouses) - begins in 2029
  - Generates ~\$3.5B annually
    - 60% General Fund / 40% tax mitigation
  - Includes B&O / pass-through references
    - Small business B&O tax exemption under \$300k
    - Sunset of large business B&O surcharge (\$250m from 2025)
  - Working families tax credit expanded
  - Sales tax exemption on certain products
  - Elimination of sale tax on certain services
  - Sunsets

9

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

Over 80 amendments were offered on the Millionaires' tax bill taking up the bulk of the 25-hour marathon floor session.

—

Only two of them passed.



10

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



HEALTH CARE ADVOCACY  
Bills, bills, bills...

*267 bills passed the legislature and were sent to the Governor's desk*

11

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Vaccines

- Vaccines and preventive services, HB 2242 - **passed**
  - Ensure continued, appropriate access to essential healthcare services by clarifying state authority to allow Washington DOH to make recommendations on preventive services including immunizations.
  - Maintain coverage for preventive services recommended by the US preventive services task force as of June 30, 2025.
  - Preserving state ability to procure a vaccine in a cost-effective manner for the childhood vaccine program.
  - Why it's important?



12

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Scope of Practice 

- Pharmacist, independent practice, SB 5924 – died
- Department of health sunrise review report, HP 1520 & SB 5513 - died
- Psychologist prescribing, SB 5112 & HB 1124 - died
- Psychiatric pharmacists, HB 2453 - died
- Naturopaths, HB 1888 - died
- APP reimbursement mandate, HB 1430 - died
- Physician assistant title change, HB 2127 - died
- Radiologic tech supervision, HB 2113 - passed

13

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Medical Transparency 

- Medical title transparency aka "truth in advertising" - HB 2261 & SB 6116 - died
  - Required all healthcare professionals to wear and identification badge displaying the practitioners name and healthcare credentials doing patient encounters.
  - Ensured that all healthcare advertisements identifies the practitioners, healthcare credentials and establishes the title "physician surgeon" in statue.

14

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

Amidst the the budget battle and 1000's of policy bills being discussed, the Legislature found time to designate an Official State Sandstone (Tenino Sandstone)! 

15

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Prior Authorization 

- Prior authorization, SB 5395 - **passed**
  - Prohibits AI prior authorization denials, prior authorization policy change is posted on a single site, clarify retroactive denial, prohibition, applies to state regulated commercial insurance
  - Always ongoing!

16

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Insurance Reform 

- Timely payment, SB 5845 - **passed**
  - Requires insurance carriers to pay "clean claims" within 30 days and reduces the time period in which reimbursement for claims can be retroactively clawed back by a carrier to 12 months.
- Significant contract modifications, HB 2106 - **died**
  - Required notice approval of midterm carrier contract changes
- Medical loss ratio, HB 2283 died - **died**
  - Increased percentage of premium that must be spent care delivery.

17

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Reproduction & Gender 

- Abortion savings program, SB 6128 - **passed**
- Fetal demise dating, SB 6025 - **passed**
- Abortion medication distribution, SB 5971 - **passed**
- Public records act exemption, HB 2176 - **died**

18

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Practice of Medicine 

- Noncompetition agreements ban, HB 1155 - passed
- Psilocybin, SB 5921 - died
- Drug compounding glp1, HB 2631 - died
- POLST modernization, HB 1724 - died

19

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Public Health 

- Vaccine and preventative services, HB 2242 - passed
- Child and youth behavioral health, HB 2429 - passed
- Fire and violence prevention 3-D printed guns, HB 2320 - passed.
- Time sensitive emergencies data repository, HB 2232 - died
- Tobacco and nicotine products flavors ban, HB 2068 & SB 5803 - died
- Rural local health officers, HB 5990 - died
- Boys and men commission, HB 2401, HB 1266 & SB5446 - died

20

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Business and facility issues 

- Consolidation, mergers, and affiliations, HB 2548 - passed
- 340 B program, SB 5981 - passed
- Medical cannabis usage and healthcare facilities, HB 2152 - passed
- Corporate practice of medicine, SB 5387 - died
- Medical records fees, SB5254 & HB 1496 - died
- Medical debt, SB 5993 - died
- Third-party litigation funding, HB 2255 - died
- Coronary interventions, HB 2545 - died

21

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

2026 Legislative Session – Other Bills of Note 

- Creating Network Adequacy Standards for Post-Acute Care, SB 5124 - **passed**
- EMS Staffing for Inter-Facility Transfers, HB 2110 - **passed**
- Hospital inspections, HB 2577 - **passed**
- IV Phthalates in medical equipment, HB 2402 - **died**
- Consumer protections for AI, SB 6284 - **died**
- Involuntary treatment act, SB 6296 - **died**
- International medical graduates, SB 5185 - **passed**

22

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



HEALTH CARE ADVOCACY  
Where are we?

*Interim = campaigning & elections*

23

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

Interim – We are here... 

- Bills signed into law (or **vetoed**)
- Agency Rulemaking
- DOH Sunrise Reviews
- Campaigning - lots and lots of campaigning
- Elections
- VOTE
- Prep for 2027 Legislative Session and ADVOCATE!

24

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

Interim – Significant Dates 

- Candidate Filing deadline is May 8
- August 4 Primary
- November 3 General Election
  - Ballot initiative to repeal the new "millionaires' tax"
  - Other initiatives / referendum could include parental rights, tax rollbacks, voter ID, etc.

25

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Interim - Budget 

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council will release the next quarterly revenue forecast in June 2026.

- The June forecast is particularly significant because it provides the first major update after the conclusion of the legislative session. It will account for:
  - Actual Tax Collections
  - Economic Shifts
  - Budget Alignment

26

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

LOOKING FORWARD to 2027 - Session 

- Session begins mid January
- Long 105-day legislative session
- Fresh start with all new budgets and bills
- Numerous cut-off deadlines
- Session adjourns late April

27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



HEALTH CARE ADVOCACY  
Questions?



Katie Kolan, JD  
katie@kathrynkolanpublicaffairs.com  
206-618-4821

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---