



Proposed 2016 Legislative Agenda

OCTOBER 1, 2015

*Washington State
Department of
Health works with
others to protect and
improve the health of
all people in
Washington State.*

**For additional information
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In addition to seeking passage of some important bills introduced last year, the first year of the legislative biennium, the Department of Health anticipates three new bills for the 2016 legislative session.

Preventing Youth Access to Vapor Products, at the request of Governor Inslee and the Attorney General (HB 1645, SB 5573)

The use of electronic nicotine delivery systems, known as vapor products, is spreading rapidly. This causes concern when the growing market includes children. Vapor products are not subject to federal or state regulation. Product advertising uses themes similar to those cigarette manufacturers used before their advertising was restricted and the candy-like flavors appeal to children.

This bill, among other things, would establish a licensing framework and prohibit the use of vaping products on school property. It also gives the Washington Liquor and Cannabis Board enforcement authority and increases fines for violations of laws restricting the sale of tobacco to minors.

Increase Legal Age to use Tobacco to 21, at the request of the Attorney General (HB 1458, SB 5494)

This bill is a high priority for the department. We support raising the age of purchase of tobacco to 21 which would curb youth access, especially in high schools, where kids are getting cigarettes from friends. Raising the age is also important because we know that almost all regular smokers in our state begin using tobacco products before they are 21. Ninety percent of individuals who purchase cigarettes for distribution to minors are less than 21. HB 1458 was voted out of the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on a strong bipartisan vote, but was not brought to the floor.

Consolidate Drinking Water Loans (HB 1464, SB 5251)

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan program provides low-interest loans to eligible public water systems to build, repair, and redesign infrastructure. The program is currently administered by three agencies. This bill will consolidate program administration at the Department of Health, resulting in efficiencies that will increase the amount of money available to local health jurisdictions for water project funding. The bill passed the Senate last year, but did not make it through the House.

Health Professions Account (Proposed for 2016 Session)

The Health Professions Account provides an accounting and resource allocation vehicle for all health professions licensing activity and is currently subject to legislative appropriation. This bill amends RCW 43.70.320, making the health professions account non-appropriated. Implementation of projects, such as essential licensing systems could be accomplished immediately rather than waiting for increased appropriation authority. This change will enhance program

effectiveness, provide immediate public safety and protection, and allow the department to respond to emergent needs in a timely manner. The department will report to the legislature biennially.

Syphilis Testing *(Proposed for 2016 Session)*

The Public Health Laboratories (PHL) conduct syphilis testing free of charge as required by RCW 70.24.100. This bill will remove the “free of charge” requirement. There has been a significant increase in the number of syphilis tests performed at the PHL over the past four years with a substantial impact to State General Fund. This would give the department flexibility to charge fees to recover diagnostic testing costs, freeing up state general funds for other public health priorities at the PHL.

Certified Counselors and Advisers Scope *(HB 1134, SB 5440)*

Currently, mental, emotional, and behavioral health services providers are required by RCW 18.19.020 to use the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV and Global Assessment of Functioning scoring tools for patient screening. This proposal amends RCW 18.19.200 to remove these obsolete references and replaces them with the more general and current criteria of risk assessment of mild, moderate, and severe mental, emotional, or behavioral problems. The bill is designed to allow more detailed description of scope, and adjustment as the practice evolves, by rule. The bill passed the House in 2015 but was amended unfavorably in the Senate.

License Compact for Medical and Osteopathic Physicians, at the request of the Medical Quality Assurance Commission *(Proposed for 2016 Session)*

This bill authorizes the Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery and the Medical Quality Assurance Commission to participate in the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact. Nineteen states introduced Compact legislation during their 2015 legislative session and 11 states have enacted it to date. The Compact will facilitate issuance of licenses and promote exchange of licensure and disciplinary information. Individual states will continue to perform disciplinary functions and license renewals.

Allopathic Physician Licensure Requirements Reform, at the request of the Medical Quality Assurance Commission *(HB 1874, SB 5773)*

This bill moves some license requirements from statute to rule for ease of updating as practice requirements evolve in the health care delivery system. It will also update training requirements to reflect current training standards and eliminate the two year restriction on the fellowship license.

FBI Criminal Background Checks – RapBack, at the request of the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission *(HB 2080, SB 5720)*

This bill proposes using the Federal Rap Back Program through the U.S. Department of Justice for background checks of nursing care professionals. This program will not only provide current background information on an individual, but will update the commission if future criminal action occurs for an individual licensed in Washington.