

## **Capitol News**

**January 24, 2018**

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We are ending week two of the 2018 session with news on an agreement on the Hirst water legislation and the subsequent passage of the capital budget. You'll recall that last session, these two issues (tied only together for political reason) contributed to the multiple special sessions. In the end, there was no resolution. The stalemate was broken this week, with the Legislature passing both bills Thursday night. Governor Inslee will sign both into law soon. With this major stumbling block out of the way, there is a glimmer of hope that the Legislature will finish its work on time.

One of WSLHA's priorities is HB 2837/SB 6157, the bills dealing with insurance carriers' prior authorization policies. Currently, only the initial evaluation and treatment visit is allowed before prior authorization is required. These bills allow for up to 12 visits before prior authorization begins. We have a hearing on SB 6157 tentatively scheduled for January 30th.

Also in the prior authorization world is SB 6510, another WSHLA priority. This bill regulates benefit managers, like EviCore, that make prior authorization determinations. This bill requires these benefit managers to register with the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) and file their contracts with the OIC. It is unlikely that this bill will get a hearing, but WSLHA is requesting that the Senate Health Care Committee conduct a work session on this bill.

Switching gears to school-based therapy, several bills dealing with McCleary and last year's HB 2242 will be heard this week. HB 2721/SB 6362 is request legislation from OSPI. It corrects implementation issues at the state level, postpones reductions in local school district levies by one year, expands levy capacity in future years, and delays K-3 class size reduction compliance by one year.

HB 2717/SB 6397 are supported by WEA. These bills make changes to the new teacher salary allocation formula and the salary regionalization formula, provide more flexibility for school levies, and ensure phase-in of I-1351.

Despite the fact that this is a short 60-day session, approximately 1200 bills have been introduced in the first two weeks. By far, this outpaces past short sessions and puts pressure on legislators to move bills out of committee before the first cutoff of the 2018 session on February 2nd. This is the deadline for all bills to be voted out of their house of origin policy committee, with the exception of bills deemed "necessary to implement the budget."