

Capitol News

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Melissa Johnson, WSLHA Lobbyist

This week saw the opposite house cutoff come and go, when House bills must be out of the Senate and Senate bills out of the House. For the remainder of the session, legislators are focused on reconciling bills that passed both chambers but in different forms. In most cases, the house of origin will accept the opposite chambers' changes to its bill. Sometimes, however, there is a conflict with the language that results in the appointment of a conference committee to work out the differences. The conferees negotiate final language that then is presented to both chambers. This language cannot be amended at this point; it's an up-or-down vote by the chamber. These votes must happen before the Legislature adjourns on April 28th.

All attention is turning to budget writers now, who are furiously trying to negotiate a final budget before the April 28th deadline. Revenue is the key puzzle piece: how much and what type. In preparation for a final budget, House and Senate fiscal committees are holding hearings on the various revenue bills in play. However, it's still unclear what the final revenue package will look like.

When **SB 5887**, our **prior authorization bill**, was voted out of the House a week ago, it was amended to remove a key provision of the bill. This amendment allows a patient to have only one "episode of care" per year in which to have six visits without prior authorization. Current law allows six visits for a new condition, or episode of care, without limitation.

The Senate "refused to concur" with this amendment and sent it back to the House, asking that the House remove this amendment. If the House refuses to remove the amendment, the Senate could ask for a conference committee to be appointed, which would negotiate final bill language.

The **music therapy bill, SB 5485**, died on the House floor calendar.