

Nathan Schlicher, MD, JD, MBA  
*President*

March 2, 2021

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*Delivered via email*

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Speaker Jinkins and Representative Cody:

John Bramhall, MD, PhD  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

On behalf of the Washington State Medical Association and the undersigned provider organizations collectively representing tens of thousands of health care practitioners across our state, we urge your support for the expedited passage of [Senate Bill 5169](#), regarding provider reimbursement for personal protective equipment expenses.

Jennifer Hanscom  
*Executive Director/CEO*

Senate Bill 5169 was introduced with bipartisan support and passed the Senate unanimously on February 10. We ask that the bill be heard and moved through the House in its current form, as quickly as possible. This issue is time sensitive as the bill contains an emergency clause and the sooner it is signed into law, the sooner the provider community will receive financial support for PPE costs that many of our members have been unilaterally shouldering over the past year.

As you know, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our members have experienced increased costs associated with PPE, having to procure more supplies – often at a higher cost than before the pandemic – in order to keep patients and providers safe, and to comply with government mandates.

Senate Bill 5169 requires that for the duration of the public health emergency, commercial insurance carriers will reimburse \$6.57 for patient encounters where there is incurred costs for PPE. The reimbursement is tied to a newly created CPT code (99072), pursuant to which the American Medical Association conducted extensive research to arrive at the stipulated reimbursement rate.

In its current form, Senate Bill 5169 reflects a compromise that was reached with Premera and includes several amendments made at the request of insurance carriers. One amendment clarified that the bill only applies to health care services that are provided in person (so that care delivered remotely would not be eligible for the reimbursement). Another amendment removed the retroactive application of the bill, and while our members preferred to be able to recoup some measure of cost that has already been incurred for PPE, the prospective application would constitute meaningful support for the provider community.

When the bill was heard in the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee, the carriers who testified on it acknowledged the changes that were being made to the bill and expressed their support for it in the amended form moving forward.

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Senate Bill 5169 is a top priority for our organizations we urge your expedited consideration of the bill. Thank you in advance for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

