



## LEGISLATIVE REPORT: *End of Session “Wrap-up”* WPHA - WALHDAB

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After nearly fifteen months of political upheaval and unprecedented partisanship, the state Legislature has completed its regular two-year session. Unless lawmakers meet in special or extraordinary session, the Legislature will not reconvene until January 2013.

Despite the political volatility surrounding the recently concluded session, the WPHA and WALHDAB remained extremely active in the legislative arena. Both organizations engaged in the process and lobbied on numerous policy issues important to public health professionals across Wisconsin.

More specifically, WALHDAB and WPHA worked on and advocated for and against a number of legislative proposals this session, including the following bills that will have (or could have had) an impact on public health in Wisconsin:

1. **Assembly Bill 93** – Under current law, adults are prohibited from purchasing cigarettes on behalf of a minor. This legislation also prohibits adults from purchasing other tobacco products (e.g., snuff; cigars; etc.) for minors. In addition, the bill prohibits the retail sale of nicotine products (not classified as cigarettes or tobacco products) to minors and would make it illegal for minors to buy or attempt to buy nicotine products under false pretenses. Both organizations supported this bill in an effort to reduce teen tobacco use.

*Position:*       **Supported**  
*Status:*         **SIGNED INTO LAW**

2. **Assembly Bill 450** – This legislation requires the WI Department of Workforce Development to administer a pilot program that offers voluntary occupational training to unemployment insurance recipients. The pilot program – which has been highly successful in other states – would allow unemployed workers to obtain on-the-job-training with potential employers without losing benefits. Both WPHA and WALHDAB supported the bill, as employment helps to reduce health disparities.

*Position:*       **Supported**  
*Status:*         **SIGNED INTO LAW**

3. **Assembly Bill 531** – This bill would have required legislative approval for any action taken by a state agency to implement provisions of the federal health care reform law. The restrictions would also have prohibited a state agency from requesting a grant or other funding from the federal government relating to the health care reform law. Both organizations opposed the bill due to the impact it would have had on public health funding.

*Position:*       **Opposed**  
*Status:*         **DEFEATED**

- Senate Bill 54** – This bill makes it illegal to possess, manufacture or distribute synthetic marijuana and certain other synthetic substances in Wisconsin. The bill classifies these substances as Schedule I controlled substances, which are substances have a high potential for abuse, but have no currently accepted medical use. Both WALHDAB and WPHA supported this bill because these substances are frequently abused by minors.

*Position:*       **Supported**  
*Status:*         **SIGNED INTO LAW**

- Senate Bill 108** – Known as the *Unsafe Milk Act*, this legislation would have legalized the sale of unpasteurized milk and other raw milk products from a registered dairy farm to the general public. Both organizations opposed this bill due to the public health concerns associated with legalizing the sale of unpasteurized milk.

*Position:*       **Opposed**  
*Status:*         **DEFEATED**

- Senate Bill 164** – Known as the *Healthy Jobs Act*, this legislation would have created a tax credit for employers that provide workplace wellness programs for their employees. Both WALHDAB and WPHA supported this legislation due the preventive health benefits of wellness programs. Although the bill enjoyed broad bipartisan support, the bill was too costly (\$5 million annually) to win legislative approval in the current fiscal environment.

*Position:*       **Supported**  
*Status:*         **DID NOT PASS**

- Senate Bill 204** – This legislation would allow K-12 students to carry epinephrine auto injectors on school grounds or at school-related activities. The bill allows children to have immediate access to life-saving medication to prevent or alleviate severe allergic reactions. The proposal was supported by WALHDAB and WPHA to improve the safety of Wisconsin students.

*Position:*       **Supported**  
*Status:*         **SIGNED INTO LAW**

- Senate Bill 237** – Under current law, public schools that choose to teach human growth and development in the classroom must ensure the curriculum is medically accurate, age-appropriate and comprehensive. This legislation repealed current law. Among other provisions, the bill requires school districts to emphasize abstinence-only curriculum and creates additional barriers for volunteer health care providers who want to teach human growth and development education to students. Both organizations opposed the bill for negative impact it could have on public health in Wisconsin.

*Position:*       **Opposed**  
*Status:*         **PASSED INTO LAW**

9. **Senate Bill 280** – This legislation would have allowed complementary and alternative health providers to practice medicine, nursing, dentistry and a number of other health care services without obtaining a license from the state of Wisconsin. The bill would have prohibited these individuals from performing certain activities, such as breaking the skin, prescribing medication and providing a specific medical diagnosis. Both WPHA and WALHDAB opposed this bill due to patient safety concerns.

*Position:*       **Opposed**  
*Status:*         **DEFEATED**

10. **Senate Bill 306** – This bill requires physicians performing abortions to confirm a woman is voluntarily consenting to an abortion and is not being coerced into undergoing the procedure. A physician who determines a woman is being coerced must provide the woman with domestic abuse information and access to a phone. In addition, the bill requires physicians to give a woman a complete, on-site physical exam before providing an abortion-inducing drug. Physicians who violate certain provision of the bill would be charged with a felony. Both organizations opposed the bill due to the potential impact it could have on access to care and women's health issues.

*Position:*       **Opposed**  
*Status:*         **PASSED INTO LAW**

11. **Senate Bill 380** – This bill would remove the enrollment cap and certain expansion restrictions placed on Family Care – the state's long-term care program – which were passed as part of the 2011-13 state budget bill.

*Position:*       **Supported**  
*Status:*         **SIGNED INTO LAW**