



September 4, 2024

Sydney Rogalla
Policy & Legislative Affairs Division
Washington Office of the Insurance Commissioner
P.O. Box 40260
Olympia, WA 98504-0260
Submitted via email to: rulescoordinator@oic.wa.gov

Re: Comments relating to prepublication draft rules implementing SSB 5986

Dear Ms. Rogalla,

The Washington Ambulance Association (WAA) appreciates the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the pre-publication draft relating to implementation of SSB 5986 and updates to the Balance Billing Protection Act. WAA greatly appreciates the continued partnership with the Office of Insurance Commissioner on this topic, especially the important implementation conversations taking place in the Ground Ambulance Advisory Group.

Several points were discussed in the convening of the Ground Ambulance Advisory Group which we wish to express here as important to ground ambulance service organizations.

1. In the proposed language for WAC 284-43B-027(3), we do not understand or support the 90-day delay for rates to take effect. Reasonable time should be given for the OIC to update its website with a new rate and that rate, once published, should be effective within 30 days. In addition, the new process refers to “previous rate submission by that ground ambulance services organization” however rates are not submitted by the ground ambulance service organization, they are submitted by the local governmental entity.
2. Additional language should be adopted in WAC 284-43B-025 requiring the carrier make payment to the ground ambulance service organization within 30 business days of receipt and accrual of interest for anything past 30 business days.
3. In the proposed WAC 284-43B-027(1)(a)(ii), the language does not follow the statute. The regulation omits the “established by” language from the statute that allows the local government entity to establish rates by a number of different methods including, resolution, ordinance, or other means.
4. Lastly, the WAA shares the concerns raised by the Washington State Medical Association regarding the increased arbitration rates. We request that the suggested arbitration rate



hikes in the preliminary draft rule be re-evaluated and ideally excluded from the rule. At the very least, we recommend adjusting them to remain below NSA IDR rates, given the effective state arbitration system, to avoid unnecessarily raising healthcare costs.

We wish to express our appreciation and support for the previous comments submitted by the Northwest Health Law Advocates related to WAC 284-43B-027(2) and geographic area. We agree with and support the new approach to this issue by the OIC in prepublication draft number two.

Thank you for consideration of our comments. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Mike Battis
President
Washington Ambulance Association