
SENATE BILL 5823

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Senators Cortes, Hasegawa, and Valdez

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1 AN ACT Relating to patient advocates; and adding a new section to
2 chapter 70.41 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 70.41
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) On or before January 1, 2027, hospitals licensed under this
7 chapter must have a staff member employed as a patient advocate who
8 is physically present every day throughout the 24-hour period for the
9 purpose of assisting patients navigate the health care system on
10 behalf of the patient.

11 (2) The requirement outlined in subsection (1) of this section
12 does not apply to:

13 (a) Rural hospitals certified by the centers for medicare and
14 medicaid services as sole community hospitals or critical access
15 hospitals except for hospitals that are owned or operated by a health
16 system that owns or operates more than two acute care hospitals
17 licensed under this chapter;

18 (b) Hospitals located on an island operating within a public
19 hospital district in Skagit county; and

20 (c) Hospitals that are not currently designated as a critical
21 access hospital, do not meet current federal eligibility requirements

1 for designation as a critical access hospital, have combined medicaid
2 and medicare inpatient days greater than 60 percent of all hospital
3 inpatient days, and are located on the land of a federally recognized
4 Indian tribe.

5 (3) On or before January 1, 2027, hospitals that are exempt under
6 subsection (2) of this section must provide patients with access to a
7 patient advocate, which may be provided as contact information for a
8 patient advocacy service, including a telephone or videoconference
9 number. The hospital must verify those services are active and
10 familiar with Washington health systems. The hospital must also share
11 with the patient how to provide the patient advocate access to any
12 necessary information including, but not limited to, medical records
13 of the patient.

14 (4) A patient advocate must assist patients within the hospital
15 by supporting the patient as the patient is navigating the health
16 care system. The patient advocate may provide patients with
17 assistance with the following services that include, but are not
18 limited to:

- 19 (a) Accessing and obtaining their medical records;
- 20 (b) Scheduling appointments and follow-up treatment plans and
21 treatment visits;
- 22 (c) Collaborating with the health care team of the patients to
23 provide the patients with better understanding of their medical
24 condition, treatment options, and other care-related questions; and
- 25 (d) Representing the interest of the patients by asking
26 questions, writing down information, and supporting patients with
27 their communication with health care providers, insurance companies,
28 and hospitals.

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