

State Rep. Jim Steineke: Assembly Republicans prioritize healthcare in upcoming session day

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MADISON – The Assembly Committee on Rules met today to [schedule legislation for the upcoming session day on Tuesday, March 16](#). The day's bills highlight Assembly Republicans' commitment to healthcare, including the following pieces of legislation:

Assembly Bill 7 – Authored by Representative Schraa (R-Oshkosh) and Senator Felzkowski (R-Irma)

[Assembly Bill 7](#) relates to pharmacy benefit managers, commonly known as PBMs, requiring that any PBMs that are not already licensed become so under the Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI). AB7, among other things, will help lower pharmaceuticals and insurance premiums that are driven up by PBM practices.

From AB 7 bill author, **Rep. Schraa**: “A small town pharmacy owner first told me about Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) and their unfair business practices. It really hit home when our PBM denied medication to my wife and daughter, which resulted in serious health issues. Many of my colleagues shared heart-wrenching stories of how PBM policies and practices have hurt their constituents, their family members, and themselves. It's time for a change.”

A similar [bill](#) garnered [bipartisan support](#) in the 2019-20 legislative session. The bipartisan legislation is backed by a number of healthcare groups, and was

unanimously approved by the Assembly Committee on Health on February 11, 2021.

Assembly Bill 34 - Authored by Representative Magnafici (R-Dresser) and Senator Jacque (R-DePere)

[Assembly Bill 34](#) relates to maintaining coverage of individuals with preexisting conditions [should the Affordable Care Act be struck down by the courts](#). Assembly Republicans passed [similar legislation on their first day on the floor of the 2019-20 legislative session](#), and are re-upping that effort once again.

From AB 34 bill author, **Rep. Magnafici**: “It is never easy seeing a patient deal with serious illnesses, but seeing a patient’s health problems be compounded by the stress of navigating the insurance process was heartbreaking...I look forward to working with Governor Evers and the entire legislature, Republican and Democrat alike, to ensure that no resident of this great state is denied access to health insurance due to a preexisting condition.”

The bill has received bipartisan support from both houses.

Assembly Bill 125 - Authored by Representative VanderMeer (R-Tomah) and Senator Bernier (R-Chippewa Falls)

[Assembly Bill 125](#) relates to Physician Assistants (PAs), implementing changes that allow PAs to maximize their contribution to the patients they serve, while maintaining a strong connection with their physician colleagues. PAs, among other things, serve a crucial role in rural parts of the state, providing increased access to primary care in otherwise underserved or rural parts of the state.

From AB 125 bill author, **Rep. VanderMeer**: “Over 2,700 PAs practice in Wisconsin, working with physicians to provide quality, cost-effective team based care to patients across the state... This proposal attempts to maintain and increase access to high quality medical care for Wisconsin patients by reducing workforce barriers for physician assistants.”

Assembly Republicans advocated for [similar legislation](#) in the 2019-20 legislative session, and are once again throwing their support behind the bipartisan bill.

Senate Bill 13 - Authored by Senator Bernier (R-Chippewa Falls) and Representative Brooks (R-Saukville)

[Senate Bill 13](#) relates to dentists, giving them the ability as healthcare professionals to administer the COVID-19 vaccine and flu vaccines. Given that dentists already administer injections every day, they must complete an 8-hour training in order to qualify as a vaccinator. With the administration estimating there will be enough vaccine for everyone in the state by the end of May, ensuring we have enough safe, educated vaccinators in place is paramount to a successful vaccine rollout.

From SB 13 bill author, **Rep. Brooks**: “This legislation safeguards consumers’ health, while allowing for the creation of a larger vaccinator pool. This policy is a win-win for Wisconsinites who wish to be vaccinated.”

SB 13 has received bipartisan support, and was unanimously approved by the Senate Committee on Health.