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September 20, 2022

Carmyn Shute
Administrative Regulations
Department of Labor and Industries

RE: Outdoor ambient heat exposure rulemaking

Dear Ms. Shute,

On behalf of the Washington State Medical Association (WSMA), thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Department of Labor and Industries' (L&I) rulemaking regarding outdoor ambient heat exposure. The WSMA is pleased to see L&I moving forward with permanent rulemaking that will protect Washington's workers from heat exposure.

Following last summer's deadly heatwave, the WSMA House of Delegates – comprised of physicians, physician assistants, and medical students from across the state – voted in favor of policy advocating for access to heat protection for outdoor workers. The complete policy requires:

That our WSMA advocate for outdoor workers to have access to preventative cool-down rest periods in shaded areas for prevention of heat exhaustion and health educational materials in their primary language.

That our WSMA support legislation and regulations creating standardized protections against heat stress specific to the hazards of the workplace including appropriate access to emergency services when there are signs or symptoms of heat exposure injury.

The WSMA is pleased to see changes to WAC 296-62-09560 clarifying that training materials on ambient heat exposure will be provided in the language and manner that an employee receiving them understands. We would also like to extend our support of changes made to WAC 296-62-09510 extending the scope of this rulemaking to apply year-round, as increasingly it is the case that Washington experiences hot days outside of the traditional warm season.

The WSMA recognizes the personal and public health repercussions of heat exposure and shares L&I's commitment to ensuring workplace safety. We would like to extend our support of this rulemaking and request that L&I continues to consider evidence-based medical studies and the personal experience of the workers directly impacted by such changes.

Should you have further questions on our policy, please contact WSMA Policy Analyst Shelby Wiedmann at shelby@wsma.org.

Sincerely,



Jeb Shepard

Policy Director
Washington State Medical Association

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