

# Refining the Wheel:

*How existing legislation, stakeholder work, and capturing the teachable moment can help steer public policy*

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# Existing Legislation

## Emergency Worker Statute (RCW 38.52)

- Liability and injury protection
- Volunteers must be registered
- Primarily used by Search and Rescue
- 18 classes of workers, including “General”

# Eastern Washington MRC

- Developed post 9/11
- Hospitals reluctant because of liability concerns
- Hospital accreditation requirements
- Retired license
  - M.D.
    - Applied before they give up their active license
    - \$175/yr.
    - 50 hours of CME every 2 yrs.
    - Carry costly liability insurance

# HB 1850: Creating a retired medical worker license

- Needs analysis
- 2003, Governor's Ad Hoc committee
- 2004, gained the support of legislators
- 2005, died in committee
- Hurricane Katrina, 2006 session HB 1850 passed unanimously in both the house and senate. Signed into law by Governor Gregoire March 15, 2006.

# HB 1850 Highlights

- Highlights:
  - 54 professions total
  - No cost for license
  - Must be registered with emerg. management
  - Valid for three years
  - Only valid during authorized activation
  - Minimum training required

## *Most Important Issue!*

- License gives **complete immunity** to the volunteer, supervisor, organization, and hospital or whomever they are assisting while working within their scope of practice
- Only exception is gross negligence

# HB 1073

- Introduced HB 1073, expanding protections gained in HB 1850 to all emergency workers
- Built strong coalition of stakeholders, (including the trial lawyers association!)
- Lesson learned: work with committee members

# Take Away

- Increased liability protections = more individuals willing to volunteer
- Don't reinvent the wheel, refine
- Favorable outcomes are not the result of one individual or one organization; it takes a village to raise a law.
- Capture the teachable moments.



# Questions?

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