

Legislation Text

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Clerk 10/04/2017

A RESOLUTION in support of full access to healthcare, particularly reproductive healthcare, for undocumented and documented immigrants, and affirming the belief that government must serve all residents regardless of ability to pay, country of origin, gender identity, sexual orientation or race.

WHEREAS, immigrants are a vital and necessary part of our society as U.S. military personnel, police officers, doctors, nurses, caregivers, teachers, and in many other roles contributing to the success of the United States of America and King County to serve our community daily, and

WHEREAS, Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to medical care, and

WHEREAS, King County has reaffirmed its commitment to equity and social justice by recognizing limited access to safe and affordable healthcare for immigrants as a systemic problem affecting primarily people of color, transgender people and people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, King County owns Harborview Medical Center, whose primary mission is to provide healthcare for the most vulnerable residents of King County, and does so in a number of ways including prioritizing care for those who do not speak English and those who are uninsured or underinsured, and

WHEREAS, nearly half of all immigrants in the United States, including documented immigrants, lack health insurance and are less likely to receive preventative care, care of chronic illness, and gender affirming treatment, and

WHEREAS, people without access to preventative care are more likely to require hospitalization than

people with access to preventative health care, and

WHEREAS, federal law does not currently allow funds to be used to provide comprehensive health care coverage to all undocumented immigrants through Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program, the Affordable Care Act or state-level health exchanges except in cases of emergency, and

WHEREAS, Washington state has elected to expand health care access to certain, limited classes of undocumented immigrants such as people under nineteen years old, pregnant women, people seeking treatment of emergency medical conditions in a hospital setting and people seeking treatment for cancer or benign life-threatening tumors, or dialysis, and

WHEREAS, King County seeks to embrace immigrants as full members of the community with a right to access culturally appropriate healthcare;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Health of King County:

A. The board of health supports the fundamental human right to access healthcare, particularly reproductive healthcare, regardless of immigration status or income.

B. The board of health affirms the belief that government must serve all residents regardless of immigrant status, ability to pay, country of origin, gender identity, sexual orientation or race.

C. The board of health seeks to expand coverage and lower barriers for all low-income immigrants who are unable to afford private insurance and unable to access Medicaid.

D. The board of health asks Public Health - Seattle & King County and UW Medicine to work with partners to continue to close the gaps in healthcare for immigrants and refugees.

E. The board of health calls upon state lawmakers, the United States Congress and the President of the United States to close gaps in healthcare access for immigrants and refugees.