



King County | Office of the Executive

Executive Girmay Zahilay

Chinook Building, CNK-EX-0800
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104-2391

July 1, 2026

The Honorable Sarah Perry
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember Perry:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that would, if adopted, rename and revise the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (“MIDD”) fund and the MIDD Advisory Committee, updating the King County Code to establish the new name King County Behavioral Health Bridge (“the Bridge”) for the fund and advisory committee.

Responsive to community feedback, the proposed new “King County Behavioral Health Bridge” name replaces the outdated language in the phrase “mental illness and drug dependency” that no longer reflects the values and priorities that guide behavioral health work today and contributes to stigma around behavioral health. The new name emphasizes the role of sales tax-funded programs in creating a bridge between people experiencing behavioral health conditions and community behavioral health treatment, other systems people interact with including the criminal-legal system, and pathways to recovery.

Investments through this fund support programs that improve health and wellness, recovery, and connection to community, especially for people most affected by inequities related to race, income, housing status, and access to care. From 2017 through 2025, these programs served over 130,000 unduplicated King County residents.

The King County Behavioral Health Bridge is projected to generate nearly \$800 million for behavioral health care in King County between 2028 and 2034. The King County Behavioral Health Bridge Implementation Plan for 2028-2034, which I am proposing for Council adoption through a separate concurrent transmittal, invests strategically to break the cycle and prevent incarceration, hospitalization, homelessness, and crisis for low-income people with mental health and

The Honorable Sarah Perry

July 1, 2026

Page 2

substance use conditions. The proposed Plan reflects and further describes the name change in this proposed Ordinance.

I look forward to working with the Council to provide access to high-quality behavioral health care for King County residents. Thank you for considering this important proposed Ordinance to ensure that the updated name for this fund and advisory committee, as well as associated plans, programs, and services, likewise reflects their role as a bridge to long term recovery, stability, and wellbeing.

If your staff have any questions, please contact Dr. Susan McLaughlin, Director of the Department of Community and Human Services, at 206-477-9309.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karan Gill', is positioned above the word 'for'.

for

Girmay Zahilay
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Karan Gill, Deputy Executive, Office of the Executive

Jasmin Weaver, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Hyeok Kim, Chief Operating Officer, Office of the Executive

Sierra Howlett Browne, Director of Government Relations, Office of the Executive

Garrett Holbrook, Council Relations Manager, Office of the Executive

Dr. Susan McLaughlin, Director, Department of Community and Human Services