

July 18, 2018

Dear Members of the King County Board of Health, King County Council, and Seattle City Council:

We write in support of Northwest Health Law Advocates' (NoHLA) recommendations for county-based health coverage programs as a promising approach to providing comprehensive coverage to uninsured immigrants.

Although the Affordable Care Act led to a dramatic reduction in the number of uninsured Washington residents, many adult immigrants are still without coverage because the Medicaid expansion and other public programs restrict eligibility, including the Health Benefit Exchange. County-based programs are an effective way to close these gaps in coverage and ensure that immigrants can access health care.

County-based programs in other states such as California and Maryland provide immigrants with consistent access to health care services, reducing delays in care that otherwise result in exacerbated health conditions, and mitigating long-standing health inequities. Washington counties can develop similar programs based on these models, tailoring them to the specific needs and resources of their communities.

We support NoHLA's recommendation that counties develop programs for their adult immigrant residents. County plans should include:

- Comprehensive coverage, including a prescription drug benefit,
- Access to a patient centered medical home, and
- Wraparound benefits to ensure effective, accessible care, such as care coordination and medical transportation.

We applaud King County's 2018 Resolution renewing its commitment to ensuring access to health care for vulnerable populations including immigrants, people of color, and transgender individuals. A program that provides county residents access to the care they need to get and stay healthy will fill the gaps in health care identified in the Resolution. Please take action to implement this Resolution by adopting the county-based coverage program recommended by NoHLA.

Sincerely,

Ahmed Ali, PharmD, Executive Director
Somali Health Board

Alison Mondj, Policy Analyst
Arcora Foundation

Christine Lindquist, Executive Director
Washington Healthcare Access Alliance

David Loud, Puget Sound Advocate for Retirement Action
Representative to Health Care is a Human Right Coalition

Elizabeth Barbosa
LatinX Health Board

Ellie Marsh, President
Western WA National Association of Hispanic Nurses (WW-NAHN)

Eric Gonzalez Alfaro, Legislative & Policy Director
Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Fajer Saeed Ebrahim, Reproductive Justice Legal Fellow
Surge Reproductive Justice and Legal Voice

Faye Ziegeweid, Board Secretary
Northwest Abortion Access Fund

Fred Swanson, Executive Director
Gay City: Seattle's LGBTQ Center

Giselle Zapata-Garcia, Co-Chair
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Ileana Maria Ponce-Gonzalez, Executive Director
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Janice Tufte, Communications
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