



## Legislation Text

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A MOTION approving the initial findings of the health advisory task force that endorse the county's direction to achieve quality of care and cost containment in King County's employee benefit plan.

WHEREAS, national health care costs in this country are skyrocketing, approaching a national crisis, and

WHEREAS, King County is, like other employers in the region, state and nation, facing an urgent need to be able to provide affordable, available quality health care to employees while effectively containing the rise in employee health care costs, and

WHEREAS, in King County the employee benefits budget is expected to increase fifteen percent or more per year for at least the next five years representing an increase from \$124 million per year spent on employee health benefits in 2003 to \$249 million in 2008, and

WHEREAS, sixty-eight percent of the county's health care dollars are used by ten percent of its enrollees, and

WHEREAS, to address this critical issue, an internal county team conducted a focused and comprehensive research effort to seek best practice approaches from research institutes as well as actual applications. This research included a variety of sources, including, but not limited to: *Epidemic of Care: A Call for Safer, Better, and More Accountable Health Care* by George C. Halvorson, George J. Isham, MD; *Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century*, Institute of Medicine; multiple studies and abstracts by the Center for Studying Health System Change, the National Committee for Quality Assurance and the Institute of Medicine; research and surveys conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation,

Washington Business Group on Health and Watson Wyatt Worldwide; and initiatives elsewhere including San Diego, Michigan, Philadelphia, Minnesota, central Florida and Oregon, and

WHEREAS, the King County council's Fiscal Year 2004 adopted budget included a proviso requiring the executive to submit to the council for its review and approval by motion the health quality task force's preliminary findings related to quality and cost effectiveness of health care for county employees by February 19, 2004, and

WHEREAS, in response to that council budget proviso, King County Executive Ron Sims created the Health Care Advisory Task ("HAT") Force, whose mission is to "(r)ecommend an innovative and achievable set of strategies to improve the quality of health care while mitigating costs in the Puget Sound market," and

WHEREAS, in its meetings of January 12 and 26, the executive's HAT Force analyzed the direction recommended by an internal King County benefits strategy group, and

WHEREAS, on February 9, 2004, the HAT Force endorsed the county's direction, verifying that King County has accurately defined the health care problem and identified the most realistic, attainable elements to achieve quality of care and cost containment in its own plan and directed the transmittal of an initial findings report to the executive, and

WHEREAS, the county executive has approved the initial findings report of the task force and presented the report to the council in conformance with the proviso,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The initial findings report of the Health Advisory Task Force, Attachment A to this motion, is hereby approved. The council will continue to exert its authority to approve, legislatively, additional findings provided by the HAT Force and the internal

benefits strategy group. The council also requests the executive to transmit the final report of the HAT Force to council by motion by June 30, 2004.