



Legislation Text

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Clerk 10/04/2004

A MOTION approving the final report of the King County health advisory task force.

WHEREAS, 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, in the 2004 budget address the county executive announced the formation of a task force to recommend workable solutions that go beyond cost shifts and reduction of benefits, and

WHEREAS, in December of 2003, King County executive Ron Sims created the health advisory task force, whose mission is to "recommend an innovative and achievable set of strategies to improve the quality of health care while mitigating costs in the Puget Sound market," and

WHEREAS, the 2004 Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 14797, included a proviso requiring the executive to submit to the council for its review and approval by motion the health advisory task force's preliminary findings related to quality and cost effectiveness of health care for county employees by February 19, 2004, and

WHEREAS, in its meetings of January 12 and 26, the executive's health advisory task force ("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, and

WHEREAS, the council approved the initial findings report via Motion 11890 and requested that the final report of this task force be submitted by June 30, 2004, and

WHEREAS, this twenty-member body brought vast and diverse knowledge and experience to bear on this critical issue, and

WHEREAS, on June 14, 2004, the King County health advisory task force under the leadership of Alvin J. Thompson, M.D., and Edward Wagner, M.D., submitted their consensus recommendation to the county executive, and

WHEREAS, their recommendation acknowledges that enough is known in the fields of science, finance and actuarial risk, public health, technology, quality measurement, health-seeking behavior, health care delivery and quality improvement to achieve better care, healthier people and affordable costs, and

WHEREAS, the task force recommends a regional partnership to activate their recommended strategy, and

WHEREAS, the county executive has approved their recommendations including strong county participation in the development of the regional partnership, and

WHEREAS, the county executive presented the report to the council in conformance with Motion 11890;

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

The final report of the King County health advisory task force included as Attachment A to this motion is hereby approved. Funds provided by King County to support the partnership recommended in the final report of the King County health advisory task force shall be appropriately matched by other partnership members. The council shall approve all King County funds proposed to support the proposed partnership that is recommended in the final report of the King County health advisory task force.

The council also requests the executive to transmit to the council by motion a progress report on creation of the partnership by March 31, 2005.