



STATE OF WASHINGTON
HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

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March 28, 2018

Dear Stakeholders and Partners:

SUBJECT: 2018 Legislative Session Summary for the Health Care Authority

Now that the 2018 Legislative Session is done, I want to share some highlights of key policy and budget implications for the Health Care Authority (HCA) and those we serve. The legislature made important investments in education—which we know is critical to lifelong health—as well as in behavioral health services, strategies to fight the opioid public health crisis, and other health-related initiatives. We at HCA look forward to working with you to implement this important work.

Behavioral health integration

We are excited to welcome the responsibilities for oversight and purchasing of community-based behavioral health services to HCA on July 1. We are working very closely with our partners at the Department of Social and Health Services to make this a smooth transition for employees and for those we serve.

School Employees Benefits Board Program implementation

In 2017, the legislature created the School Employees Benefits Board Program for the state's K-12 employees. The supplemental budget provides additional funding needed to successfully implement the program. In addition, Senate Bill 6241 provides additional clarification as HCA works with the School Employees Benefits Board to design and implement the program by January 1, 2020.

Opioid response: Medicaid Medication Assisted Treatment rate increase

Governor Jay Inslee requested additional resources to respond to the opioid crisis. The supplement budget includes \$1.2 million general fund-state (\$6.2 million total funds) to increase the Medicaid Medication Assisted Treatment rate for opioid use disorder to match the Medicare rate. This will encourage more providers to treat patients with opioid use disorder.

Pediatric primary care rate increase

When the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) took effect in 2014, it included a temporary reimbursement rate increase for Medicaid primary care practitioners. The supplemental budget provides an additional \$5.8 million general fund-state (\$13.8 million total funds) to increase medical assistance pediatric primary care rates for the same set of evaluation and management and vaccine administration codes that were included in the 2013-14 temporary rate increase provided by the ACA.

Dental services for children

The budget includes an additional \$139 thousand general fund-state (\$278 thousand total funds) to expand the Access to Baby and Child Dentistry program for children with disabilities through their thirteenth birthday.

Compact of Free Association Premium Payment Program

The budget includes \$1.2 million general fund-state (\$1.2 million total funds) to create the Compact of Free Association premium payment program. This program provides premium assistance for health care insurance purchased through the Health Benefit Exchange for Pacific Islanders.

Hearing aids

In 2010, the Medicaid hearing aid benefit for adults was terminated. The budget provides \$358 thousand general fund-state (\$1.5 million total funds) to restore the hearing aid benefit for Medicaid-eligible adults effective January 1, 2019. This will provide hearing aids to an estimated 6,300 adults with hearing loss.

Governor's Indian Health Council

Funding is provided for HCA to convene and provide analytic, technical, and communication support to the Governor's Indian Health Council.

Post-eligibility review backlog

To help ensure HCA is processing Washington Apple Health (Medicaid) post-eligibility reviews in a timely manner, the budget provides funding for 15 temporary staff to address the backlog and ensure all cases have an eligibility determination within 60 days.

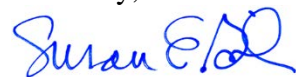
Health Homes

The Health Homes program integrates care within existing systems for high-risk, high-cost adults and children, including clients who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. The budget provides for a 20 percent rate increase effective July 1, 2018, and performance payments for care coordinator organizations serving fee-for-service clients in the Health Home Program. These performance payments shall be equal to five percent of the average base rate and shall reward successful client engagement.

Children's mental health

House Bill 2779 continues the work of the Children's Mental Health Work Group through December 2020, to improve mental health care access for children and their families.

Sincerely,



Susan E. Birch, MBA, BSN, RN
Director