



STATE OF WASHINGTON

June 18, 2020

The Honorable Emily Randall
Washington State Senate
P.O. Box 40433
Olympia, WA 98504-0433

The Honorable Steve Tharinger
House of Representatives
P.O. Box 40426
Olympia, WA 98504-0426

Planning for Aging and Disability Issues JLEC
Washington State Senate
P.O. Box 40433
Olympia, WA 98504-0433

Planning for Aging and Disability Issues JLEC
House of Representatives
P.O. Box 40426
Olympia, WA 98504-0426

SUBJECT: Palliative Care Workgroup

Dear Senator Randall, Representative Tharinger, and members of the JLEC:

The budget proviso creating a Palliative Care Workgroup—to be co-chaired by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) and the Health Care Authority (HCA)—has the goal of determining next steps for insurance coverage of specialty palliative care as defined in the Bree Collaborative's 2019 palliative care report.

We are deeply committed to furthering palliative care work in Washington State. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated budgetary constraints, both OIC and HCA are doing careful analysis of how to most efficiently and effectively achieve the state's goals with limited resources. This includes consideration of both the time frame in which work can best be done, and the most efficient methods to achieve desired objectives.

Both agencies are concerned that in the current fiscal and staffing environment, and in the setting of competing urgent priorities related to the COVID-19 response, we do not have the staff resources to establish and convene a workgroup and produce a report in the required timeframe.

It is our belief that the goal of the proviso can be achieved through facilitating a dialogue between the Washington palliative care community and the members of the Association of Washington Health Plans (AWHP). The OIC commits to facilitating a conversation between the Palliative Care Association and AWHP's members.

Again, both the OIC and HCA are strongly committed to advancing work around palliative care. We request to be relieved of the specific tasks described in the proviso, but believe that the proposed approach will achieve the underlying goals in a manner that aligns to the constraints of the current situation.

The Honorable Emily Randall
The Honorable Steve Tharinger
Members of the Joint Legislative Executive Committee
June 18, 2020
Page 2

Should you have any questions, please contact Sue Birch by telephone at 360-725-2104 or via email at sue.birch@hca.wa.gov or Commissioner Kreidler by telephone at 360-725-7103 or via email at mikek@oic.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Susan E. Birch, MBA, BSN, RN
Director
Health Care Authority



Mike Kreidler
Insurance Commissioner
Office of the Insurance Commissioner

By email

cc: Representative Paul Harris, House of Representatives
Senator Karen Keiser, Washington State Senate
Representative Marcus Riccelli, House of Representatives
Representative Robert Sutherland, House of Representatives
Molly Voris, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor
Dr. Judy Zerzan, Chief Medical Officer, CQCT, HCA
Mich'l Needham, Chief Policy Officer, PD, HCA
Dr. Emily Transue, Associate Medical Director, CQCT, HCA
Lonnie Johns-Brown, Legislative Director, Policy and Legislative Affairs, OIC
Candice Myrum, Deputy, Policy and Legislative Affairs, OIC
Dennis Martin, Special Assistant for Policy and Legislature, PD, HCA
Mandy Weeks-Green, Policy Analyst, Policy and Legislative Affairs, OIC
Shawn O'Neill, Legislative Relations Manager, PD, HCA