



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY**

626 8th Avenue, SE • P.O. Box 45502 • Olympia, Washington 98504-5502

December 19, 2018

The Honorable Tana Senn  
Washington State Legislature  
House of Representatives  
1611 116<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Suite 206  
Bellevue, WA 98004

Dear Representative Senn:

**SUBJECT: Requested Status Report on Medicaid Financing and Home Visiting**

The Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) are working together to identify sustainable Medicaid funding for early childhood home visiting services, and to improve coordination across health and early learning. This letter provides an update on our work together, and a submission date for the report required in E2SHB 2779. The legislative report reflects input from home visiting stakeholders, HCA and DCYF. The final report is under review by the Office of Financial Management, and is expected to be delivered to the Legislature in January 2019.

**Background**

HCA submitted an initial recommendation report to DCYF in August 2017 outlining key alignment strategies, and short-and-long-term Medicaid financing options. Cross-agency leadership met in October 2017 to review the report, discuss alignment strategies, and prioritize financing options. In January 2018 an implementation roadmap was submitted to DCYF, emphasizing the need to more deeply explore potential impacts to home visiting service delivery and administrative processes before implementing Medicaid financing options.

**Stakeholder Meetings and New Report**

E2SHB 2779, Section 4 (2018) requires HCA to submit recommendations building upon the August 2017 report. The Legislature allocated \$100,000.00 to HCA to develop this report. HCA conducted an expedited procurement process to contract with a consultant to facilitate stakeholder workshops to identify financing option(s) offering the most support and least disruption to current program service delivery and administrative processes.

The Athena Group began work on July 1, 2018, concurrent with the release of the legislatively-allocated funds. HCA and the Athena Group worked closely with DCYF and Thrive WA (who jointly administer the Home Visiting Services Account under RCW 43.216.130) to plan the

September 2018 stakeholder workshops, held in Spokane, Tukwila, Sequim, Lacey, Burlington, Vancouver, Yakima, and Olympia.

Approximately 80 local home visiting providers and stakeholders attended these meetings. The final meeting in Olympia was specifically for legislators, legislative staff, advocates, and other policy makers. An overview of Medicaid financing options plus key insights from previous workshop participants was provided.

### **Initial Recommendations**

The following key themes and insights emerged throughout the workshops:

- Home visiting providers operate under a high level of reporting and administrative burden, which influences home visiting model implementation.
- State agencies and legislators are encouraged to “think big” and “take time to get it right,” and to include local providers in the planning process for any selected option.

The Athena Group identified the following criteria for any financing strategy based on participant feedback:

- Promote a high level of coordination at local and state levels.
- Limit (or reduce, if possible) administrative burden on home visitors.
- Promote sustainability.
- Increase continuity of care.
- Include families with children prenatal to five years old.
- Reach more families.
- Provide flexibility/equity for rural/urban and other specialized population needs.

### **December 2018 Stakeholder Meeting**

Cross-agency leadership met December 17, 2018, to review the workshop feedback, the draft report, and identify next steps. At this time, neither agency anticipates making any specific legislative request related to this project. Cross-agency fiscal analysis is expected to be complex, requiring the development of shared assumptions, and taking into consideration an emerging overlay relating to the federal Families First Prevention Services Act. The agencies are committed to developing a funding proposal for 2020. Next steps include determining:

- Fiscal impacts for Medicaid federal financial participation (FFP) related to managed care services and fee-for-service programs.
- Determining fiscal impacts related to the administrative workload to manage Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services negotiations, contract negotiations, and the administration and implementation of Medicaid funding and reporting.
- Continuing cross-agency coordination with HVSA-funded programs to develop implementation strategies that limit redundant reporting and administrative requirements.

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Should you have any questions regarding our work, please contact me by telephone at 360-725-1863 or via email at [maryanne.lindeblad@hca.wa.gov](mailto:maryanne.lindeblad@hca.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "MaryAnne Lindeblad".

MaryAnne Lindeblad, BSN, MPH  
Medicaid Director

cc: Jody Becker, Deputy Secretary, DCYF