



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

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News Release

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Newly formed governor's council seeks public input on ways to eliminate health disparities

Friday, October 20, 2 – 4 p.m., Renaissance Seattle Hotel, 515 Madison St, Seattle

The inaugural meeting of the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities will give Washingtonians a chance to provide input into efforts to create a statewide plan for eliminating health disparities in Washington. The October 20 meeting, which takes place from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Renaissance Seattle Hotel, will also be an opportunity for the public to meet council members.

The term "health disparities" describes the disproportionate burden of disease, disability and death among a particular population or group when compared to the general population. The existence of serious health disparities among racial and ethnic groups in the United States and in Washington State is well documented.

The Legislature established the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities this year when it passed Substitute Senate Bill 6197. The council has 17 members: a chair appointed by the governor; representatives of 14 state agencies, boards and commissions; and two members of the public. It is staffed by the State Board of Health.

The Council will create a state action plan for eliminating health disparities in Washington State by 2012; establish advisory committees to address specific issues; issue recommendations for improving the availability of culturally appropriate health literature and interpretive services; and promote communication among state agencies and between state agencies and communities of color, the public sector, and the private sector to address health disparities. It will also collaborate with the State Board of Health to develop "health impact reviews"—evaluations conducted at the request of the governor or a legislator to identify whether proposed policies and budgets are like to reduce health disparities or make them worse.

For more information about the meeting, please visit the Board's Web site at www.sboh.wa.gov or contact the State Board of Health office at (360) 236-4104.

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The Board's mission is to provide statewide leadership in advancing policies that protect and improve the public's health. It does this by reviewing and monitoring the health status of all people in Washington; analyzing policies, providing guidance, and developing rules; promoting system partnerships; and encouraging public engagement in the public health system. For more information, visit the Board's Web site at www.sboh.wa.gov.