

Draft Intent & Purpose (revised 1/19/23)

Current Statute	Proposed Update (DRAFT)
<p>RCW 43.20.270: The legislature finds that women and people of color experience significant disparities from men and the general population in education, employment, healthful living conditions, access to health care, and other social determinants of health. The legislature finds that these circumstances coupled with lower, slower, and less culturally appropriate and gender appropriate access to needed medical care result in higher rates of morbidity and mortality for women and persons of color than observed in the general population. Health disparities are defined by the national institute of health as the differences in incidence, prevalence, mortality, and burden of disease and other adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups in the United States.</p> <p>It is the intent of the Washington state legislature to create the healthiest state in the nation by striving to eliminate health disparities in people of color and between men and women. In meeting the intent of chapter 239, Laws of 2006, the legislature creates the governor's interagency coordinating council on health disparities. This council shall create an action plan and statewide policy to include health impact reviews that measure and address other social determinants of health that lead to disparities as well as the contributing factors of health that can have broad impacts on improving status, health literacy, physical activity, and nutrition.</p> <p>RCW 43.20.275 (2) The council shall promote and facilitate communication, coordination, and collaboration among relevant state agencies and communities of color, and the private sector and public sector, to address health disparities...</p>	<p>The legislature honors the broad differences and bonding similarities that make up our state. Health and wellbeing require approaches that uplift the whole child, whole family, and whole community. Wellbeing consists of interdependent dimensions such as emotional, physical, occupational, social, spiritual, intellectual, environmental, and financial wellness. Furthermore, Indigenous practices teach us that health is different for each person and each community, and that health is interconnected between people, animals, and land. Health equity only exists when all individuals have the opportunity to attain their full health potential. Therefore, the legislature finds that health and wellbeing require individuals and communities to have access to opportunities, resources, and services according to their unique needs. Such needs include, but are not limited to, cultural, linguistic, and disability access needs.</p> <p>The legislature finds that improving and sustaining health and wellbeing for all individuals, communities, and environments in Washington requires state government to undo all forms of racism and bias, heal wounds caused by colonization and other acts of violence and oppression, be led by the inherent power of community, fully serve individuals with intersecting identities, and support communities in building sustainability and connection. Racism harms us all by causing dire impacts on public, community, and individual health. Centuries of colonial practices aimed at destruction of communities and cultures has resulted in historical trauma and intergenerational trauma that continue to negatively impact our health and wellbeing. Throughout history, state policies have systematically excluded people of color from the opportunities and resources we all need to thrive. The American Public Health Association recognizes racism as a driving force of the social determinants of health and as a barrier to health equity. Studies show that race, income, and zip code have a bigger impact on health than personal behavior, medical care, or genetic code. Achieving health equity and wellbeing is not possible as long as racism and its many related forms of discrimination are present.</p> <p>It is the intent of the Washington state legislature to advance health equity, wellbeing, and social justice through creating an environment where all individuals and communities are free from racism and other forms of oppression and have full access to the social determinants of health, so they can be the healthiest version of themselves.</p> <p>In meeting the intent of this chapter, the interagency council on health equity and justice shall create a statewide vision for health and wellbeing as well as policy that promotes healthy conditions. In the development of this vision and policy, the council shall share decision making power with communities who are disproportionately impacted by inequities that too often lead to negative health consequences. The statewide vision for health and wellbeing shall guide agencies as they continue to fulfill requirements pursuant to RCW 70A.02 [Environmental Justice] and RCW 43.06D [Office of Equity]. The council shall collaborate with the Environmental Justice Council, the State Office of Equity, and other agencies, boards, and commissions to ensure state government efforts are rooted in anti-racism, access, belonging, and justice and that these efforts benefit all of us.</p>

Areas of Statute

Intent	What the state hopes to achieve.
Purpose	Reason for being, including main role and need(s) the entity must address.
Power & Responsibilities	How the entity operates and the channels it uses to achieve its purpose, make impact, and wield influence. Interaction with key partners. Accountability measures.
Deliverables	Products the entity must deliver, to whom, and the frequency.
Structure	Group classification, membership, subcommittees, etc.
Staffing	Staffing level and roles dedicated to its operation.
Funding	Funding level and source(s) to achieve its purpose and sustain efforts.

Notes from December 2022 Council Meeting:

Current Statute	Discussion
TO: to create the healthiest state in the nation	<p>The phrase “healthiest state in the nation” evokes American Exceptionalism and competition, which contradicts the Council’s vision and operating principles.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve health equity and eliminate health disparities for all people in WA • WA will advance health equity and social justice through creating an environment where all communities can be the healthiest versions of themselves • to eliminate the conditions that produce health disparities and to actualize conditions that allow for prosperity and belonging for all communities. • “to promote, establish, and realize a state/process of wellness and maximized healthfulness for each and every person who resides within our borders” • “is committed to embedding belonging through eliminating health inequities” • “resilient state”
BY: by striving to eliminate health disparities	<p>The phrase “strive to eliminate” could be strengthened with action-oriented words, as well as acknowledging the need to SUSTAIN health equity.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “create and sustain” • “will advance” • “eliminate the root causes of health inequities” • “Promote, establish, and realize a state/process”
FOR: in people of color and between men and women	<p>Broaden concepts of populations, remove gender binaries, expand definition of who we serve.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Commitment to anti-racism” • “dismantling racism at every level, centering belonging and justice for all communities who have been historically and currently marginalized, and ensuring all Washingtonians have equal opportunity to access the social determinants of health” • “All communities can be the healthiest versions of themselves, by providing necessary services and resources according to [their] unique needs” • “eliminating structural, environmental, and institutional racism and health disparities” • “Undoing racism, balancing power, and strengthening communities” • “Rooted in anti-racism, belonging, and justice”