



**Date:** September 14, 2023

**To:** Members of the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities

**From:** Victor Rodriguez, Council Vice Chair

**Subject:** Approving the 2024 Request Legislation and Decision Package Proposals

### **Background**

The state Legislature created the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities (Council) through [Second Substitute Senate Bill 6197](#) (2SSB 6197) in 2006. The bill was intended to "create the healthiest state in the nation by striving to eliminate health disparities in people of color and between men and women." The Council's authority, structure, and membership were incorporated in statute, mainly in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) [43.20.270](#), [RCW 43.20.275](#), and [RCW 43.20.280](#).

The State Board of Health was directed in statute to convene and provide assistance to the Council. The Board was originally allocated \$173,000 annually to support the Council. After indirect costs are subtracted and a 10% reduction for administrative cuts occurred in the 2012 budget, the budget for Council support was \$137,000 for Fiscal Year 2016. This level of funding provides for 1.0 FTE Council Manager and this staffing level has not been adjusted since. As capacity and resources allow, the State Board of Health has provided additional support to the Council in the forms of staff time and effort and coverage of public meeting expenses, language interpretation and translation, staff and member travel expenses, and more. While the Council and Board operate in a resourceful and efficient manner, the state's underinvestment in the Council has created severe limitations on the Council's work.

Over the years, the Council has worked in partnership with state, public, private, and community organizations to identify priorities, convene advisory committees, and create policy recommendations. The Council has heard from its advisory committees and members of the public, particularly communities most impacted by inequities, that the state needs to address the structural and institutional inequities in our state system as a key strategy to eliminating health inequities. While state government has an important role to play, it cannot reverse all of our state's persisting inequities on its own. Organizations in the non-profit, philanthropic, business, and local government sectors are also working to promote health equity, optimal health, and wellness and there are opportunities to partner and align efforts.

Several years ago, the Council began discussing the need to redesign its statute to incorporate many years of work and learning and to create opportunity for greater

collective impact. In September 2021, the Council voted to form an advisory committee to make recommendations to update its statutory authority. Since November 2022, the Council has been holding a series of public redesign workshops to focus on this effort.

Throughout the redesign project, the Council has centered its vision and operating principles, and Council staff has connected with key government and community partners to consider how the Council can lead or support unified goals.

The Council set a goal of submitting a legislative proposal (for statutory changes) and a decision package (for increased fiscal resources) to advance during the 2024 Legislative Session. These proposals were due to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the Governor's Office by September 13, 2023. Based on the Council's direction, Council staff drafted and submitted these proposals by the due date. Today's meeting materials include these placeholder proposals, as drafted on September 7, 2023.

### **Summary**

At today's meeting, Council members will discuss the draft legislative and budgetary proposals. Members will have the opportunity to make minor additional revisions to finalize the proposals, in alignment with the Council's redesign core concepts and foundational truths.

### **Recommended Council Action**

After discussion, the Council may choose to consider, amend if necessary, and adopt the following motion:

**Proposed Motion:** The Council approves the legislative and budgetary proposals, as drafted on September 7, 2023, and discussed and revised at today's meeting. The Council directs staff to work with Council leadership, Redesign Leads, Council members and their agencies, and additional partners to advance the proposals for the 2024 Legislative Session. The Council recognizes that specific language in the proposals may have evolved and may continue to evolve during the legislative process due to legal and technical considerations as well as guidance from OFM, the Governor's Office, and others. The Council encourages staff to adjust specific language in the request legislation and proposals as needed, while honoring the intent, foundational truths, and core concepts of the Council's redesign process, as much as feasible. As needed and whenever practicable, staff should reach out to individual Council members to share information and receive members' input and guidance.

To request this document in an alternate format or a different language, please contact us at 360-236-4110 or by email at [healthequity@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:healthequity@sboh.wa.gov). TTY users can dial 711.

PO Box 47990 • Olympia, WA 98504-7990  
360-236-4110 • [healthequity@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:healthequity@sboh.wa.gov) • [www.healthequity.gov](http://www.healthequity.gov)