

1 **Governor’s Interagency Council on Health Disparities**
2 **Statute Redesign – request legislation (9/12/24 draft)**

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4 *This draft request legislation for the 2025 Legislative Session largely resembles*
5 *[House Bill 2346](#) from the 2024 Legislative Session. Substantive differences between the*
6 *two versions are noted with underlining and yellow highlight.*

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8 *Sections of the draft legislation with non-substantive changes (i.e., sections 1, 5, 6) are*
9 *omitted for ease of reading. For the full request legislation in the z-draft format, refer to*
10 *the Agency Request Legislation package in today’s meeting materials.*

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12
13 **(Sec. 2) RCW 43.20.270**

14 The legislature finds that women and people of color experience significant disparities
15 from men and the general population in education, employment, healthful living
16 conditions, access to health care, and other social determinants of health. The
17 legislature finds that these circumstances coupled with lower, slower, and less culturally
18 appropriate and gender appropriate access to needed medical care result in higher
19 rates of morbidity and mortality for women and persons of color than observed in the
20 general population. Health disparities are defined by the national institutes of health as
21 the differences in incidence, prevalence, mortality, and burden of disease and other
22 adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups in the United
23 States.

24
25 It is the intent of the Washington state legislature to create the healthiest state in the
26 nation by striving to eliminate health disparities in people of color and between men and
27 women. In meeting the intent of this chapter, the legislature creates the Governor's
28 Council for Health Justice and Equity. This council shall create an action plan and
29 statewide policy to include health impact reviews that measure and address other social
30 determinants of health that lead to disparities as well as the contributing factors of
31 health that can have broad impacts on improving status, health literacy, physical
32 activity, and nutrition.

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(Sec. 3) RCW 43.20.275

(1) In collaboration with staff whom the office of financial management may assign, and within funds made expressly available to the State Board of Health for these purposes, the Board shall convene and provide assistance to the Council.

(2) The Council shall consist of 24 core members which shall include the following representatives:

- (a) One from the Commission on African American Affairs;
- (b) One from the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs;
- (c) One from the Commission on Hispanic Affairs;
- (d) One from the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs;
- (e) One from the Governor’s Committee on Disability Issues and Employment;
- (f) One from the LGBTQ Commission
- (g) One from the Women’s Commission;
- (h) One from the State Board [of Health];
- (i) One from the Department [of Health];
- (j) One from the Department of Social and Health Services;
- (k) One from the Department of Commerce;
- (l) One from the Health Care Authority;
- (m) One from the Department of Agriculture;
- (n) One from the Department of Ecology;
- (o) One from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
- (p) One from the Department of Children, Youth, and Families;
- (q) One from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; and
- (r) Seven members of the public, including at least two youth representatives, who have direct lived experience with health inequities and will bring the voices of communities who have been systematically excluded from the power, opportunities, access, and resources needed to attain health and well-being.

1 (3) The Council shall establish its decision making and voting procedures within Council
2 bylaws.

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4 (4) Councilmembers must be persons who are committed to and well-informed
5 regarding principles of health justice and equity and who, to the greatest extent
6 practicable, reflect diversity in race, ethnicity, age, disability status, sexual orientation,
7 gender, gender identity, military or military family status, urban and rural areas, and
8 regions of the state.

9
10 (a) To promote agency commitment and coordination, each state agency on the
11 Council must identify an executive team level staff person or designee to
12 participate on behalf of the agency.

13
14 (b) Nongovernmental members of the Council shall be appointed by the
15 Governor with guidance from the Office of Equity.

16
17 (c) The youth representatives must be 26 years or younger at the time of
18 appointment.

19
20 (d) The Governor shall appoint cochairers who have expertise or experience with
21 health justice and equity. At least one cochair must be selected from among the
22 councilmembers representing the commissions identified in subsection (2)(a)
23 through (g) of this section or members of the public identified in subsection (2)(r)
24 of this section. The Governor shall consider cochair nominations or
25 recommendations from the Council.

26
27 (5) When representing the Council, councilmembers may communicate policy
28 recommendations and positions on behalf of the Council instead of their respective
29 agency or organization.

1 (6) The Council is a class one group under RCW [43.03.220](#). Nongovernmental
2 members of the Council must be compensated and reimbursed in accordance with
3 RCW [43.03.050](#), [43.03.060](#), and [43.03.220](#).

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6 **(Sec. 4) RCW 43.20.280**

7 (1) The Council shall work with governmental and nongovernmental partners to create a
8 statewide vision and universal goals for health and well-being as well as policy
9 recommendations to move Washington toward achieving its vision and goals.

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11 (a) The vision, goals, and policy recommendations shall:

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13 (i) Provide an actionable framework to support communities, state
14 agencies, the Governor, and the legislature in advancing health justice
15 and equity in Washington state;

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17 (ii) Recognize racism as a public health crisis;

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19 (iii) Recognize how climate change affects us all and exacerbates
20 inequities;

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22 (iv) Incorporate the diversity of communities across the state and
23 recognize the intersecting forms of oppression people may experience as
24 barriers to attaining optimal health and reaching their full potential;

25
26 (v) Guide state agencies as they continue to fulfill requirements pursuant
27 to RCW 70A.02 [Environmental Justice] and RCW 43.06D [Office of
28 Equity]; and

29
30 (vi) Work toward resolving the negative structural and social determinants
31 of health and promoting the positive determinants.

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(b) In the development of the vision, goals, and policy recommendations, the Council shall engage communities and may use participatory methods that promote community-led planning and design, so that communities who are disproportionately impacted by inequities have meaningful opportunity and power to shape narratives, priorities, and policy recommendations.

(2) The Council shall promote and facilitate communication, information sharing, coordination, and collaboration among relevant state agencies, organizations that have been established for and by the people most impacted by an issue such as racism and health inequities, communities of color and other marginalized communities, and the private and public sectors to support health justice and equity, well-being, truth and reconciliation, and healing.

(3) The Council, with assistance from state agencies and other partners, shall conduct public hearings, research, inquiries, studies, or other forms of information gathering to:

(a) Understand how the actions of state government ameliorate or contribute to health inequities.

(b) Recommend initiatives for improving the availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate information and services within public and private health-related agencies.

(4) The Council shall collaborate with the Environmental Justice Council, the State Poverty Reduction Work Group, the State Office of Equity, and other state agencies, boards, committees, and commissions to propel state government toward actions that are coordinated and rooted in antiracism, access, belonging, and justice so these efforts benefit all Washingtonians.

1 (5) The Council shall submit an initial report to the Governor and relevant committees of
2 the legislature by October 31, 2027, with the statewide vision and universal goals for
3 health and well-being detailed in subsection (1) of this section. Beginning October 31,
4 2029, and every two years thereafter until 2039, the Council shall submit an update to
5 the Governor and relevant committees of the legislature with policy recommendations,
6 the status of policy adoption and implementation among relevant state agencies, the
7 Governor, and the legislature, as well as any revisions to the statewide vision and
8 universal goals for health and well-being. The Council shall make its reports publicly
9 available on its website to provide convenient access to all state agencies.

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11 (6) Within available resources, all relevant state agencies shall collaborate and be
12 responsive to the Council's requests.

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14 (7) The Council may:

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16 (a) Use topics and findings from Health Impact Reviews, as authorized by
17 **RCW 43.20.285**, to inform the Council's priorities, strategies, and
18 recommendations;

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20 (b) Use disaggregated data to inform its work;

21
22 (c) Develop policy positions; and

23
24 (d) Form advisory committees or implement participatory models, such as
25 collaboratives or community assemblies, to support the Council in gathering
26 information and developing policy priorities, recommendations, and positions.
27 These groups may include members of community and state agencies.

1 **(Sec. 7) RCW 44.28.810**

2 ~~Review of governor's interagency coordinating council on health disparities—~~
3 ~~Report to the legislature.~~

4 The joint ~~[legislative and audit review]~~ committee shall conduct a review of the
5 governor's interagency coordinating council on health disparities and its functions. The
6 review shall be substantially the same as a sunset review under chapter [43.131](#) RCW.
7 The joint committee shall present its findings to appropriate committees of the
8 legislature by December 1, 2016.

9 ***[Remove this language from related statute due to expiration]***