



Date: September 30, 2025

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

From: Health Disparities Council Staff

Subject: Establishing a Planning Advisory Committee for the Statewide Vision Project

Background

The Health Disparities Council's (Council's) request legislation ([HB 1262/SB 5228](#)), if passed by the state Legislature, would change the Council's name to "Governor's Council for Health Justice and Equity." The Council would also be required to create a statewide vision and universal goals for health and well-being, as well as policy recommendations to move Washington toward achieving the vision and goals. The statewide vision and goals would be due to the Governor and Legislature by October 31, 2027.

As discussed during the [Council's redesign project](#), some benefits of creating and implementing a **statewide vision and universal goals** include:

- **Moving the Council's/state's work away from a deficit focus and toward conditions for optimal health.** Agency staff are often tasked with addressing gaps in health outcomes, but it is unclear what the ideal standard of health is. This task could be interpreted as striving to create parity with majoritized demographic groups, however those groups also face significant barriers to optimal health and well-being.
- **Having a framework to advocate for systems change, a vision for why that is needed, and a roadmap to get there.** Creating conditions that support optimal health for everyone, including marginalized communities, requires moving toward more fair and responsive systems. Focusing efforts on holistic health, root causes, and social and structural drivers of health can influence a multitude of downstream health outcomes.
- **Opportunities for alignment, collaboration, and action.** A vision can give clear priorities to help communities, agencies, the Governor, and the Legislature make positive change. The vision and goals can also guide the Council's future policy development.

At the Council's February 13, 2025, public meeting, the Council voted to approve the following motion: *The Council commits to creating a statewide vision and universal goals for health and wellbeing. The Council will strive to complete a first version of the vision and goals by October 31, 2027, while also working at the pace required for meaningful community and partner involvement. The Council directs staff to develop project plans and begin outreach to invite additional partners to participate in the project.*

Council members discussed a commitment to contributing to the project. They also discussed the need to participate in efforts between regular Council meetings to make progress on the project.

Since then, Council staff have heard interest from some partners who are curious about how to contribute to the statewide vision. Staff recognize that the process of developing a statewide vision is an opportunity to build a coalition for health justice and equity, requiring engagement with a broad range of partners as well as communities who are disproportionately impacted by inequities.

As a next step, Council staff are asking Council members to consider creation of a planning advisory committee. The advisory committee would work with staff to develop recommendations for:

- A proposed project plan; and
- Ways to integrate aligned efforts, data and information, resources, and engagement strategies into the project.

The advisory committee's work can give momentum to the project and help:

- Identify opportunities for strategic partnership;
- Avoid unnecessary redundancy; and
- Build the relationships, trust, and shared accountability that are necessary for subsequent steps of the statewide vision project.

Establishing Advisory Committees

The Council has authority to establish advisory committees to develop plans and recommendations for a specific topic. The Council's most recent advisory committee was created in 2021 to make recommendations on updates to the Council's statutory authority (i.e., Council Redesign), which led to the Council's request legislation and decision package (funding request to the Governor and Legislature).

According to the Council's authorizing statute ([RCW 43.20.275](#)):

(4) In order to assist with its work, the council shall establish advisory committees to assist in plan development for specific issues and shall include members of other state agencies and local communities.

(5) The advisory committee shall reflect diversity in race, ethnicity, and gender.

Additionally, the [Council's bylaws](#) (updated February 7, 2019) specify:

- Advisory Committees will include volunteer Council members in addition to members of other state agencies local communities.
- Each Advisory Committee will include at least one Council member.
- Each Advisory Committee will select a Committee Chair from among the volunteer Council members unless one is appointed by the Council Chair when the committee is established.
- Council staff will provide staff support to each Advisory Committee.

Summary

At today's meeting, Council members have the opportunity to consider whether to establish an advisory committee. Council members may also discuss topics such as the scope, priorities, membership, and deliverables of a planning advisory committee. This information can help guide Council staff and future advisory committee members.

Recommended Council Action

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

Proposed Motion: The Council establishes a planning advisory committee (committee) for the statewide vision project. The committee will work with Council staff to create a proposed project plan, which should identify ways to integrate aligned efforts, data and information, resources, and engagement strategies. The Council directs staff to convene and provide support to the committee. Staff shall incorporate today's discussion themes as well as ongoing individual guidance from Council Members and Chairs.

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