



Washington
Association for
Community Health
Community Health Centers
Advancing Quality Care for All



**COMMUNITY
HEALTH NETWORK**
of Washington™

May 1, 2025

RE: Thank you for a budget that prioritized the health care safety net

Dear Senator Muzzall,

On behalf of the Washington Association for Community Health and Community Health Network of Washington, thank you for the hard work you did to largely maintain health care safety net programs in a difficult budget year. Our organizations represent Washington's 28 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs or CHCs), which deliver a spectrum of integrated primary care, oral health, behavioral health, and pharmacy services to medically underserved patients, regardless of their ability to pay.

We particularly appreciate that the final budget avoided cuts and changes to the Medicaid Pharmacy Benefit, Medicaid Adult Dental Benefit, Apple Health Expansion, and the Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD) Medicaid programs. Changes to these programs would have left patients without coverage and would have forced CHCs to make major staffing and programmatic cuts.

The Legislature also made investments that will improve access to care. This includes continued funding for 17 school-based health center (SBHC) operating grants and \$2.6 million invested in five SBHC capital projects. These investments meet students and families where they are, making medical, behavioral, and dental health care services more accessible.

The additional \$5.5 million invested in six CHC dental capital projects will increase dental capacity across the state. Oral health care is crucial for overall health, reducing risk of diabetes, heart disease, and premature births. With these investments, CHCs will be able to see 21,000 new patients and schedule over 74,000 new appointments annually.

We also appreciate inclusion of the budget proviso directing the Health Care Authority to convene primary care providers to develop value-based prospective payment methodologies in Medicaid. These payment systems will help prioritize quality over quantity, hold clinics accountable for patient outcomes, and promote equitable and team-based care.

Thank you, again, for largely protecting the health care safety net amidst severe budget challenges. Please also consider us as partners in the work needed to continue protecting these and other Medicaid programs at risk due to pending federal changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Pearson".

David Pearson
Chief Executive Officer
Washington Association for Community Health

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leanne Berge".

Leanne Berge
Chief Executive Officer
Community Health Network of Washington