

Washington Health Benefit Exchange

A brief background

Washington Health Benefit Exchange (Exchange) was established by the legislature in 2011 as a public-private partnership that operates Washington Healthplanfinder, the online eligibility and enrollment portal used by one in four Washington residents to obtain health and dental coverage.

Washington Healthplanfinder allows customers to find, compare and enroll in qualified health plans and gain access to federal tax credits, reduced cost sharing, and eligibility and enrollment into Washington Apple Health (Medicaid program). As of 2024, the Exchange now offers coverage to all Washingtonians, regardless of immigration status.

The Exchange oversees a Spokane Valley based customer support center that provides free enrollment assistance and language support in over 200 languages. Customer support is also provided through a robust network of over 3000 assisters and community organizations who provide outreach, education, and enrollment assistance across the state.

The Mission of the Exchange



The Washington Health Benefit Exchange seeks to redefine people's experience with health care by radically improving how Washingtonians secure health insurance through innovative and practical solutions and an easy-to-use customer experience. These are reflected in our values of integrity, respect, equity, and transparency as related to those we work with and those we serve.

In carrying out the mission, the Exchange works closely with the Governor's office, Health Care Authority (HCA), Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to identify and achieve our goals.

The Exchange is also committed to identifying and supporting those who need assistance in overcoming barriers to seek, find, and use their health insurance coverage.

Equity at the Exchange



Equity is a fundamental pillar to the society we seek to build. The process of advancing toward equity will be disruptive and demands vigilance, dismantling deeply entrenched systems of privilege and oppression. We must focus our efforts on people and places where needs are greatest, especially communities of color, and go beyond remedying a particular inequity to address all determinants of health.

Our goal is that all Washingtonians have full and equal access to opportunities, power and resources to achieve their full potential.

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Exchange Governance

The Exchange is governed by an 11-member bipartisan board comprised of a chair and eight voting members appointed by the Governor. Board members are nominated by the Republican and Democratic caucuses in both the Washington State House of Representatives and Senate, are appointed by the Governor.

Current Exchange Board Members

- Chair: **Monica R. McLemore**, Ph.D, MPH, RN, University of Washington School of Nursing Professor
- **Mabell Bodell**, Nephrologist, Confluence Health
- **Don Conant**, Ph.D., General Manager at Valley Nut and Bolt, and Assistant Professor, School of Business at St. Martin's University
- Sen. **David Frock**, former state legislator
- **April Betts Gibson**, Regional Executive Director, Proliance Surgeons
- **Hiroshi Nakano**, MBA, Director of Managed Care, Valley Medical Center
- **John Schapman**, Executive Director, Thriving Together NCW
- **Len Sorrin**, Retired Vice-President of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, Premera Blue Cross
- Ex-Officio: **Mike Kreidler**, Washington State Insurance Commissioner
- Ex-Officio: **Susan Birch**, Director, Washington State Health Care Authority



Exchange Leadership Team

- **Ingrid Ulrey**, Chief Executive Officer
- **Wynne McHale**, Chief of Staff
- **Jim Crawford**, Chief Financial Officer
- **Leah Hole-Marshall**, General Counsel and Chief Strategist
- **David Sorrell**, Chief Information Officer
- **Carla Reyes**, Chief Operating Officer
- **Tara Lee**, Chief Communications Officer
- **J. Manny Santiago**, Chief of Equity and Community Engagement

Exchange Budget

The Exchange budget is appropriated by the Legislature. The Exchange is also required by the legislature to be self-sustaining, defined in statute as "capable of operating with revenue attributable to the operations of the Exchange."

Current revenue sources include the existing two percent premium tax on health insurance premiums for qualified health plans sold through *Washington Healthplanfinder*; reimbursement for activities performed on behalf of Washington Apple Health (the state's Medicaid program); and a carrier assessment on products sold in the marketplace. The Exchange's current operating budget is approximately \$75 million a year.