

# Budget and policy priorities for 2025



## Drive affordability: Continue Cascade Care Savings

The state-funded premium assistance program helps more than 100,000 lower-income Washingtonians afford coverage. Continuing this program and protecting hard-fought gains at the state level is more critical than ever given the anticipated expiration of federal enhanced premium tax credits at the end of 2025.

- ▶ **Appropriate \$95 million general fund-state to continue Cascade Care Savings and meet growing demand in the 2025-27 biennium.**



## Contain health care costs: Support proposals to address cost drivers

Over the last three years, health insurance premiums have increased an average of 10% each year and become more unaffordable. The solution includes adopting reference-based pricing models, improving health care ownership transparency, protecting consumers from medical debt and increasing oversight of health care mergers and consolidation.

- ▶ **Support recommendations from the Health Care Cost Transparency Board.**



## Protect health equity gains: Continue to serve all Washingtonians

The state's Section 1332 Innovation Waiver enables noncitizen Washingtonians to purchase insurance on Washington Healthplanfinder and use Cascade Care Savings to afford coverage. This waiver is at risk of being amended or withdrawn by the new federal administration.

- ▶ **Safeguard noncitizen residents' data privacy and ensure they have access to affordable health coverage, including Cascade Care Savings.**



## Maintain high-quality, responsive customer service

Ongoing maintenance and operations are essential in keeping our systems secure, modern and in compliance with federal requirements.

- ▶ **Fund the Exchange's operations as outlined in its decision packages.**



## Support federally mandated changes to Medicaid

Federal regulations now require states to streamline Medicaid eligibility processes for all programs by 2027. To comply, the Health Care Authority requested that the Exchange leverage Washington Healthplanfinder to support the Department of Social and Health Services' eligibility processing for Classic Medicaid clients.

- ▶ **Appropriate \$16 million general fund-state to support federally required system changes.**