



November 8, 2024

The Honorable Annette Cleveland
Chair, Senate Health & Long Term Care
Committee

The Honorable Marcus Riccelli
Chair, House Health Care & Wellness
Committee

The Honorable Ann Rivers
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee

The Honorable Joe Schmick
Ranking Minority Member
House Health Care & Wellness Committee

The Honorable June Robinson
Chair, Senate Ways & Means Committee

The Honorable Timm Ormsby
Chair, House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Lynda Wilson
Ranking Minority Member, Operating
Senate Ways & Means Committee

The Honorable Chris Corry
Ranking Minority Member
House Appropriations Committee

Dear Senators and Representatives,

The Washington Health Benefit Exchange (Exchange) is pleased to submit its Annual Strategic Plan Update, pursuant to RCW 43.71.030(9). This includes information about the Exchange's activities over the past year.

The Exchange helps Washingtonians obtain health and dental insurance coverage. This is done through Washington Healthplanfinder, the online integrated eligibility and enrollment portal; the Spokane-based Customer Support Center; and a robust, statewide network of more than 3,000 in-person assisters that includes navigators, brokers, tribal assisters and enrollment centers.

As one of 21 state-based marketplaces in the country, the Exchange continues to implement federal and state initiatives to connect people to coverage. Notable achievements this year include,

- **Record high enrollment** - Driven by the Medicaid unwind and the continued availability of federal enhanced premium tax credits and state premium assistance (Cascade Care Savings), more than 270,000 Washingtonians enrolled in qualified health and dental plans as of November 2024.
- **Affordability gains** - Created by the Legislature and launched by the Exchange in 2023, Cascade Care Savings helped more than 100,000 low-income Washingtonians afford their monthly premiums. This program especially impacted rural residents, communities of color and people transitioning off Medicaid.

P.O. Box 657 | Olympia, Washington 98507

Direct: 360.688.7700

- **Qualified health plan expansion launch** - In 2024, for the first time, people regardless of citizenship status can shop for and purchase qualified health or dental plans through Washington Healthplanfinder and access Cascade Care Savings (but not federal premium tax credits). This results in approximately 2,400 new customers gaining coverage. The Exchange also supported eligibility and enrollment activities in the Health Care Authority's Apple Health Expansion program, which provides Medicaid coverage for 12,000 residents, regardless of citizenship status.
- **Continuity of coverage during Medicaid unwind** - As states resumed annual eligibility reviews for Medicaid enrollees, the Exchange partnered with the Health Care Authority and community organizations to communicate with beneficiaries and support people no longer eligible for the program. More than 73,000 Washingtonians who were no longer eligible for Medicaid regained coverage by purchasing a qualified health plan through Washington Healthplanfinder.
- **Advancing equity** - This year, the Exchange Board refreshed their equity statement and are committed to using an intersectional approach to address bias and oppression. With funding from the Legislature, the Exchange established a Tribal Lead Organization to support tribal assistors and expanded language access across customer channels. Our customer support center now serves Washingtonians in more than 240 languages and in-person assistors help customers in over 40 languages.

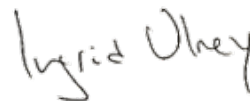
These activities were guided by our bipartisan Board of Directors and furthered our mission to radically improve how Washingtonians secure health coverage. We appreciate the Legislature's ongoing support for the Exchange and look forward to ongoing collaboration.

Please let us know if you have any questions about our annual update.

Sincerely,



Monica McLemore
Board Chair
Washington Health Benefit Exchange



Ingrid Ulrey
Chief Executive Officer
Washington Health Benefit Exchange

Enclosure

cc: Washington Health Benefit Exchange Board Members
Mabel Bodell, Nephrologist, Confluence Health
Don Conant, Business Administration and Economics Chair and Professor, Saint Martin's University
David Frockt, Former Washington State Senator
Janice Green, President and Chief Executive Officer, Women's Business Enterprise Council Pacific
April Lynne, Chief Operating Officer, Proliance Surgeons
Hiroshi Nakano, Vice President of Value Based Care, Valley Medical Center
John Schapman, Deputy Director, Thriving Together North Central Washington
Len Sorrin, Retired, Vice-President, Congressional and Legislative Affairs, Premera Blue Cross
Mike Kreidler, Washington State Insurance Commissioner, Ex-Officio
Susan Birch, Director, Washington State Health Care Authority, Ex-Officio
Jim Crawford, Chief Financial Officer, Washington Health Benefit Exchange
Leah Hole-Marshall, General Counsel and Chief Strategist, Washington Health Benefit Exchange
Shirley Prasad, Government Affairs Director, Washington Health Benefit Exchange