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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Washington Health Benefit Exchange Issues Statement on Approval of Cascade Care Plan Designs

OLYMPIA, Wash. – Washington Health Benefit Exchange (Exchange) board approved the design for Cascade Care plans today. Cascade Care plans are qualified health plans that have a standard health benefit design across health insurance carriers making it easier to understand and offer more value for *Washington Healthplanfinder* consumers.

Today, Pam MacEwan, CEO of the Washington Health Benefit Exchange, and Ron Sims, the Exchange's Board Chair, issued the following statement regarding the approval of the designs as a step in implementing [Senate Bill 5526](#) (Cascade Care):

"Our enduring goal is to ensure that every Washingtonian has access to health insurance coverage that protects themselves and their family. The approval of today's design of standard plans is a step toward implementing suitable coverage options that are more understandable and of more value to all Washingtonians.

"The Exchange would like to thank the Standard Plan and Plan Certification workgroups, and the many other contributors who helped make this design reality. We look forward to continuing to partner with the Health Care Authority, Office of the Insurance Commissioner and other key individuals in stemming the tide of higher costs and unaffordable deductibles that has prevented many from securing a health plan that met their needs."

Next steps of implementing Cascade Care include:

- The Exchange will be working on marketing materials and outreach for Cascade Care informed by focus groups and testing with a goal to develop tools and materials for consumers that will help them in selecting the best plan among their available options based on factors that are important to the consumer –such as, cost, network, customer service, and quality;
- The Health Care Authority will be initiating a procurement process of public option plans in early 2020. Public option plans are qualified health plans that have a standard benefit design with additional affordability, quality and value requirements; and
- The Office of Insurance Commissioner will publish filing instructions in spring 2020.

Cascade Care creates new health care coverage options that will be available through *Washington Healthplanfinder* beginning November 1, 2020 for coverage effective January 1, 2021.

Reminders: Enrollment is offered year-round to individuals and families through Washington Apple Health (Medicaid). Customers enrolled in Apple Health will receive a notice 60 days before the month they enrolled in or renewed their coverage last year.

About Washington Healthplanfinder



NEWS RELEASE

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Washington Healthplanfinder is an online marketplace for individuals and families in Washington to compare and enroll in health insurance coverage and gain access to tax credits, reduced cost sharing and public programs such as Medicaid. The current open enrollment period for *Washington Healthplanfinder* is Nov. 1 through Dec. 15.

About Washington Apple Health

In Washington, Medicaid is called [Washington Apple Health](#). Free or low-cost coverage is available year-round for those who qualify. Since the Affordable Care Act launched in October 2013, more people have access to preventive care, like cancer screenings, treatment for diabetes and high blood pressure, and many other health care services they need to stay healthy. Apple Health clients enroll and renew online using *Washington Healthplanfinder*. Apple Health is administered by the Washington State Health Care Authority: www.hca.wa.gov

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