



King County



August 11, 2009

Dear federal delegation members

The local Boards of Health in the Puget Sound region and Clark County represent the health of over 60% of the state's population, or 4.1 million people. Every day, we witness the unacceptable impacts our failing health care "system" has on the health of the public. Without comprehensive health reform, the health of our communities will continue to erode and financial pressures will continue to increase. To this end, we have come together to ask Congress to enact comprehensive health reform **this year**.

We ask that you not be deterred by the theatrical tactics of those who oppose reform. The status quo is not financially sustainable, nor does it lead to the healthy individuals and communities we all want and deserve.

The Boards of Health of six of the largest counties in Washington State support federal health reform legislation which incorporates principles we believe will promote individual and community health. These principles require that all people have access to health services that:

- Are comprehensive, high-quality, conveniently located, and affordable;
- Promote health and prevent disease;
- Encourage diverse communities to be engaged in improving health outcomes; and
- Reduce disparities based upon race, income, geography or other external factors.

Health reform must also be built on the foundation of a strong public health system. Public health interventions reach beyond the capacity of individual doctors, patients, and insurance plans. Public health departments conduct health research and gather data that form the basis of community health policies and programs, they inform the public about health hazards and disease prevention protocols, and they collaborate with private organizations and institutions to leverage their knowledge and expertise.

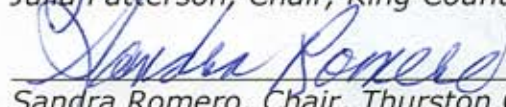
We appreciate that both houses of Congress have recognized the importance of public health. We ask that you work to preserve the Prevention and Public Health Investment Fund in the Senate bill, and the national prevention and wellness strategy in both the Senate and House bills.

It is public health, in conjunction with the medical care system, which enables individuals and communities to be as healthy as possible at the least possible cost. We urge you to enact health reform legislation that provides comprehensive health care to all United States residents, bolstered by a strong public health infrastructure that will enable all of us to thrive.

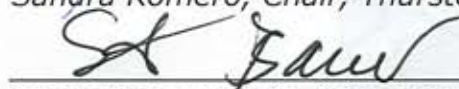
Sincerely,



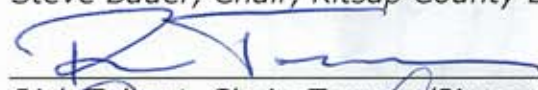
Julia Patterson, Chair, King County Board of Health



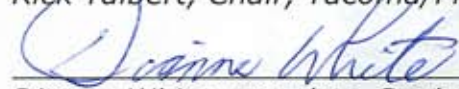
Sandra Romero, Chair, Thurston County Board of Health



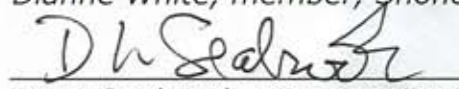
Steve Bauer, Chair, Kitsap County Board of Health



Rick Talbert, Chair, Tacoma/Pierce County Board of Health



Dianne White, member, Snohomish County Board of Health



Dave Seabrook, representing Clark County Board of Health