Resolution

Proposed No. 08-07.2

A RESOLUTION relating to the King County department of public health budget and calling on the state of Washington to provide adequate, stable, dedicated, long-term financing for local public health statewide and to provide financing options for local jurisdictions to protect, promote and provide for the health of the public.

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of King County government to provide regional public health services to the 1.8 million residents of King County, as well as the hundreds of thousands of workers and tourists who enter the county each day, and

WHEREAS, state law vests in the King County Board of Health oversight of all matters pertaining to the preservation of the life and health of the people of King County, including the adoption of countywide public health policy and the enactment and enforcement of local public health regulations, and

WHEREAS, over the past century, public health functions have led to remarkable gains in health that have significantly increased longevity and improved quality of life, including accomplishments such as: safe food and water dramatically reducing illness
and deaths; fluoridation of water reducing tooth decay and tooth loss; population-wide vaccination programs eradicating smallpox worldwide and making other once-common diseases rare; and better hygiene, nutrition, antibiotics and access to health care, contributing to a ninety percent decrease in infant mortality and a ninety-nine percent decrease in maternal mortality since 1900, nationwide, and

WHEREAS, public health functions provided by the King County government protect, promote and provide for the health of the public every day, and

WHEREAS, over the past decade, federal and state revenues that support public health, such as the motor vehicle excise tax, have been eliminated, limited or reduced, thus requiring significant increases in the level of county general fund resources for public health services, and

WHEREAS, increases in county general fund contributions to public health are not sustainable over the long term, and

WHEREAS, on August 4, 2008, the King County executive projected the 2009 King County general fund budget deficit at $86.5 million, which may require significant reductions in public health services, and

WHEREAS, in a study on county financial health, the Washington state Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development found that all counties across the state are fiscally distressed, and

WHEREAS, the Washington state legislature's 4410 Joint Select Committee concluded that the Washington state public health system is under-funded by more than $600 million each biennium and that the need for additional funding for local public health jurisdictions statewide is critical, and
WHEREAS, the 4410 Joint Select Committee concluded that funding for public health must be a joint responsibility of the state and local jurisdictions, and
WHEREAS, counties have limited local authority to provide for adequate funding for public health, and
WHEREAS, in 2007, King County and the King County Board of Health adopted a Public Health Operational Master Plan ("PHOMP"), establishing a mission, goals, principles and strategies to guide the delivery of public health services and increase the number of healthy years lived in King County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Health of King County:

A. The Board of Health reaffirms the mission, goals, principles, functions and strategies adopted in the PHOMP and finds that the lack of adequate financing for public health places implementation of the PHOMP at risk, as described in Attachment A to this resolution.

B. The Board of Health finds that the resulting risks to the health of the public are unacceptable.

C. The Board of Health finds that it is imperative to identify and acquire adequate, stable, dedicated, long-term state and local funding sources for public health in order to protect, promote and provide for the health of the public.

D. The Board of Health calls on the state of Washington to provide adequate, stable, dedicated, long-term financing for local public health statewide and to provide financing options for local jurisdictions to protect, promote and provide for the health of the public.
E. The Board of Health calls on King County, the city of Seattle and other cities in King County to pass legislation to place public health financing as a top priority on their state legislative agendas.

F. The Board of Health commits to working with the King County executive, King County council, the city of Seattle and other cities in King County, and community, regional, and state partners to educate the public about the value of public health and the need for adequate, stable, dedicated, long-term state and local funding sources.

G. The Board of Health urges the State to examine any and all adequate and stable options for state and local financing for public health.

H. The Board of Health requests that the department consider possible revenue enhancements and propose for the board's consideration reasonable fees and fee increases that fully pay for the cost of services they support, in lieu of reductions in services.

I. The Board of Health recognizes that the growing lack of adequate health insurance coverage is a major contributor to the increasing need for public health services and the lack of revenue to support them. The Board of Health requests that the provision committee forward to the board a set of principles that the board and others can use in
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advocating for state or national healthcare reform.

Resolution was introduced on 8/7/2008 and passed by the Board of Health on 8/7/2008, by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Mr. Ferguson, Ms. Lambert, Ms. Patterson, Ms. Clark, Mr. Rasmussen, Mr. Hutchinson and Dr. Counts
No: 0
Excused: 8 - Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Sherman, Ms. Frisinger, Dr. Nicola, Ms. Manning, Mr. Gossett and Mr. Licata

KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Julia Paterson, Chair

ATTEST:

Anne Noris, Clerk

Attachments

A. Public Health at Risk