



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

*PO Box 47890 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7890
Tel: 360-236-4030 • 711 Washington Relay Service*

February 24, 2020

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Governor of the State of Washington
Post Office Box 40002
Olympia, Washington 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

Please accept the Department of Health's letter of support for the Poverty Reduction Work Group's (PRWG) *10-year Plan for the Future* to reduce poverty and inequality in Washington. For the past two years, PRWG has worked diligently to develop a plan that, if implemented, will meaningfully and measurably reduce poverty and inequality in our state. We are grateful to you for your support of poverty reduction, and look forward to bringing the plan to action.

Reducing poverty and inequality is critically important to the mission of the Department of Health, which is to work with others to protect and improve the health of all people in Washington State. As an agency, we are committed to fairness and justice to ensure access to services, programs, opportunities and information. We recognize that communities that experience the greatest health disparities are those who have been historically marginalized and underrepresented in the workforce. In March of 2019 I issued a Secretary's Directive reaffirming the Department of Health's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and cultural humility.

The intersection between inequality and poverty is clear. I am proud to have our agency represented in the development of the Poverty Reduction Work Group's *10 Year Plan for the Future*, and I am committed to working with our state agencies and community partners to actively change our systems to reduce poverty and promote human dignity.

The success of the PRWG plan would mean improvements to the health and quality of life of all people in Washington State. I also believe achieving this plan would reduce health care costs and create space for innovative improvements in how we serve all of the people of Washington State.

We understand that PRWG co-lead agencies will conduct a series of community engagement meetings and finalizing the *10-year Plan for the Future* this summer. We look forward to supporting their efforts. In the meantime, we urge your continued support of the strategic plan and taking immediate steps to begin implementing it by:

- Directing state agencies to write action plans to fulfill the strategies outlined in the plan;
- Elevating the influence and expertise of people most affected by poverty in the implementation of the plan;

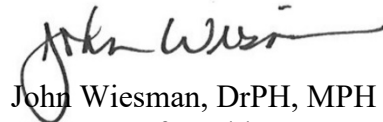
The Honorable Jay Inslee
February 24, 2020
Page 2

- Supporting the collaborative efforts of the Health and Human Services Subcabinet to improve state systems to be human-centered, integrated, and meet needs of people experiencing poverty and inequality;
- Recognizing the critical and foundational role of public health agencies across the state in reducing poverty and addressing issues of inequality; and
- Funding the PRWG's short-term priorities in the next budget cycle.

We believe these actions will lay a strong foundation for the full implementation of the plan over the next 10 years, and provide immediate, urgent relief for the 1.8 million Washingtonians currently struggling to make ends meet in communities throughout our state.

Thank you for supporting the Poverty Reduction Work Group and your passion for making Washington state a place where every child, adult, and family can thrive. If I can do anything further to support this effort, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Wiesman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH
Secretary of Health