



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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September 19, 2014

TO: David Schumacher, Director
Office of Financial Management

FROM: John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH
Secretary of Health

SUBJECT: Department of Health 2015-17 Biennial Operating Budget Submittal

I have attached the Department of Health's budget request responsive to the Governor's directive for 15 percent state general fund reductions and a prioritized list of "buy backs." This budget request aligns with the agency's updated strategic plan and protects the foundational public health services that the public health community has been working on for the last few years.

In putting together this budget, the department used a methodical process that evaluated all general fund programs against the list of foundational public health services and a matrix of evaluation criteria, which resulted in a ranking of programs/services. After initial decisions were made on proposed reductions, the list was shared widely with our partners and stakeholders for input. Their input was very helpful and was used to make final decisions.

This budget request, if fully implemented, will have negative impacts to the public's health. Critical funding for important services such as family planning, HIV prevention, neurodevelopmental treatment, maxillofacial care coordination, and breast, cervical, and colon cancer screening will all be reduced or eliminated. Other impacts will reduce support for rural health care and for women on WIC using our local farmer's markets. After 40 percent of general fund state reductions since the Great Recession, there is simply no way I can submit a general fund budget reduction package to avoid negative impacts to the public's health.

Our proposal does include a couple of one-time fund swaps of fund balance. While this reduces the cuts to services this year, it of course proposes major problems for upcoming fiscal years. That is, when our baseline general fund is cut, we will start out future biennia with inadequate funding for the services we provide today, which will necessitate either an increase in our general fund revenue or additional service cuts to our most vulnerable populations.

I look forward to discussing issues identified in the submittal and those related to state general fund reductions.

Attachment

cc: Danielle Cruver, Office of Financial Management
Jason McGill, Office of Financial Management