



## Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Health (DOH) requests additional spending authority to maintain the web portal for the Health Electronic Resource for Washington (HEAL-WA). Operations costs are increasing as the number of users increase. Though administered through the University of Washington (UW), DOH provides the funding to support the portal's ongoing maintenance to ensure this valuable tool continues to allow healthcare providers to access professional literature and clinical resources.

## Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2022	2023	2021-23	2024	2025	2023-25
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>						
Fund 02G - 1	\$512	\$644	\$1,156	\$860	\$1,025	\$1,885
Total Expenditures	\$512	\$644	\$1,156	\$860	\$1,025	\$1,885
<b>Revenue</b>						
02G - 0299	\$512	\$644	\$1,156	\$860	\$1,025	\$1,885
Total Revenue	\$512	\$644	\$1,156	\$860	\$1,025	\$1,885

## Decision Package Description

### Problem

In in 2020 session, legislature approved DOH's request for additional spending authority for the HEAL-WA web portal. However, the department incorrectly calculated the ongoing costs for the upcoming 2021-23 biennium. This request asks for additional, ongoing spending authority to remedy the error.

Currently, the revenue the department has collected for the HEAL-WA web portal exceeds its spending authority. DOH requests additional ongoing appropriation to support the expenses of UW in maintaining and improving HEAL-WA for Washington State healthcare providers.

### Background

The HEAL-WA web portal provides certain providers with access to the latest evidence-based healthcare information. Access to current, peer reviewed clinical information improves the providers' ability to respond to patient questions, develop treatment plans, and deliver quality care.

In 2007, legislature enacted Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill (E2SSB) 5930 (Chapter 259, Laws of 2007) to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission. This legislation requires UW to provide health professions with access to online clinical resources. It also requires DOH to collect a license surcharge from 24 health professions (all of whom have access to the online resources) and transfer the revenue to the UW Health Sciences Library to support staffing and resource licenses for the web portal.

The number of licensees within the 24 professions has grown, which has increased UW's expenditures for online resources and also increased the revenue collected by the department. This revenue will provide HEAL-WA with additional resources to adequately support the inflationary increases for staffing and associated costs as well as for online subscriptions and outreach to health professions participating in the program. Specific investments include:

- Providing HEAL-WA providers with access to the premier medical journal in the United States: Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA);
- Establishing a document delivery service to obtain requested articles from sources to which the UW does not usually subscribe, giving users access to a wider range of information;
- Providing online training to allow users to take advantage of resources to assist with patient care decisions and shared decision making; and
- Promoting the program to potential users through conference attendance and representing HEAL-WA at key meetings, including professional conferences and health policy events.

As the number of users increase, the cost of library resources also increases. Library resources are licensed as subscriptions, with costs set by the publisher of each resource. These costs are established based on the estimated number of users and have been increasing by eight to 15

percent annually.

The additional appropriation requested in this proposal allows the DOH to provide the funds to continue offering timely online and mobile access to authoritative information resources and decision support tools. The current resources include: evidence-based databases, decision support tools, electronics books, consumer education monographs, patient education materials, and journal articles on peer-reviewed research. Users of the system have consistently voiced an ongoing need for full text journal articles and decision support tools, which have been difficult for UW to sustain because of their greater expense.

Without this additional spending authority, the resulting budget compression may result in the cancellation of resources relied on by healthcare providers. UW has already pared down resources, so further reductions will impact users. More specialized profession-specific resources such as Natural Medicines for integrative medicine and Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI) Abstracts for veterinary resources may have to be cancelled. VisualDX for physicians, physician assistants, and nurses was cancelled in the past due to budget compression. The inability to maintain or expand resources would affect healthcare providers' ability to access current information and ultimately affects patient care.

Budget compression may also lead to a reduction in staff to maintain and update the website, troubleshoot problems, and assist users may have to occur. HEAL-WA currently is accessible Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and requires the current staffing level to maintain this level of service. Staffing reductions would result in reduced service hours and reduced access.

## Assumptions and Calculations

### ***Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:***

This proposal seeks to support the existing activities of the HEAL-WA portal and make needed adjustments to support the evolving needs of the state's medical/clinical community.

### ***Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:***

Calculations informing this request involve comparing the existing contractual agreement with the UW with their assessment of future expenditures. Anticipated revenues are then compared to anticipated expenditures which demonstrate that revenues and fund balance combined are sufficient to cover the total appropriation resulting from this request. Projections indicate a nominal fee increase may be necessary (\$1 or \$2 per licensee) in future biennia. For more details, supporting documents titled, "2021-23 PL-P8 Maintain HEAL-WA Web Portal - FnCal" and "2021-23 PL-P8 Maintain HEAL-WA Web Portal - Budget" are available.

### ***Workforce Assumptions:***

Not applicable

### ***How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?***

HEAL-WA is a resource available to the medical community which assures healthcare providers are able to care for all communities equitably.

## Strategic and Performance Outcomes

### ***Strategic Framework:***

This request supports Results Washington Healthy and Safe Communities by ensuring participating healthcare professionals have access to the latest evidence based research.

This request also supports the Agency Strategic Plan Goal 3: Ensure health equity and improve population health, by increasing resources available to the participating healthcare professionals.

**Performance Outcomes:**

With the additional appropriation, HEAL-WA will be able to adequately support the inflationary increases for current online subscriptions and outreach to professional health associations participating in this innovative program by:

- Increasing the number of resources available;
- Establishing a document delivery service to obtain requested articles from sources the UW does not usually subscribe to, giving users access to a wider range of information;
- Providing online training for users on how to use the portal to best take advantage of resources to assist with patient care decisions and shared decision making; and
- Increasing outreach to potential users through conference attendance and representing HEAL-WA at key meetings, including professional conferences and health policy events.

**Other Collateral Connections**

**State Workforce Impacts:**

Not applicable

**Intergovernmental:**

Legislature has directed the department to collect a license surcharge and transfer the revenue to the UW Health Sciences Library to support the HEAL-WA web portal. These funds are necessary for UW to maintain the current level of services for the web portal.

**State Facilities Impacts:**

Not applicable

**Changes from Current Law:**

Not applicable

**Puget Sound Recovery:**

Not applicable

**Legal or Administrative Mandates:**

The following proviso exists within Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6168, Section 221(2):

“During the 2019-2021 fiscal biennium, each person subject to RCW 43.70.110 (3)(c) is required to pay only one surcharge of up to twenty-five dollars annually for the purposes of RCW 43.70.112, regardless of how many professional licenses the person holds.”

As a result of this proviso, the department is required to audit renewals and applications for the 24 participating professions to ensure health professions only pay one HEAL-WA surcharge each year. Approximately 20 percent of the participating professionals hold more than one credential requiring a manual renewal process versus an automated renewal.

The Office of the Washington State Auditor completed a performance audit in 2018, *Aligning Healthcare Professional Fees with Licensing costs*, and one of the recommendations was to develop and implement a plan to decrease the surplus for HEAL-WA and ensure the fee reflects current contract costs. This request will address the surplus revenue and bring the fund balance for the HEAL-WA program down. If the number of healthcare professionals continues to grow at the current rate of two to three percent per year, a fee increase is not necessary in the near future.

**Stakeholder Response:**

The participating professions and associations will be supportive of UW using the funds already collected to expand the resources and usability of the HEAL-WA web portal.

### IT Addendum

***Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?***

No

### Objects of Expenditure

Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2022	2023	2021-23	2024	2025	2023-25
Obj. A	\$4	\$5	\$9	\$7	\$8	\$15
Obj. B	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1	\$1	\$2
Obj. C	\$506	\$636	\$1,142	\$848	\$1,011	\$1,859
Obj. E	\$2	\$3	\$5	\$4	\$5	\$9

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