



Department of Health
 2021-23 First Supplemental Budget Session
 Policy Level - Q3 - Improving Credentialing Performance

Agency Recommendation Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic required the Department of Health’s, health professional credentialing section to shift to a continuity of operations model where most staff work from home. This change resulted in technology-related limitations associated with remote working leading to delays in processing applications for health care provider credentials and a 34,000 pending application backlog. These delays are compounding an existing health care workforce shortage crisis and impacting access to care for patients. The Department of Health requests funding to add project-based staff to improve credentialing performance with the goal of issuing credentials within seven calendar days of receiving a complete application.

Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2022	2023	2021-23	2024	2025	2023-25
Staffing						
FTEs	26.1	0.0	13.05	0.0	0.0	0.0
Operating Expenditures						
Fund CVD - N	\$2,488	\$0	\$2,488	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$2,488	\$0	\$2,488	\$0	\$0	\$0

Decision Package Description

The COVID-19 pandemic required the Department of Health (DOH), Health Systems Quality Assurance division's credentialing function to shift to a continuity of operations model. Beginning March 2020, most of the credentialing and customer service staff started working from home. Technology-related limitations associated with remote working led to delays in processing applications for health care provider credentials. At the same time, applicant and employer expectations for more rapid delivery of active credentials to respond to the pandemic increased. This combination of increased demand and reduced productivity resulted in significant delays and a backlog. The health care and behavioral health systems are currently reporting severe staff shortages that are affecting access to essential health care services. The current backlog includes about 34,000 pending applications, as well as backlogs in FBI background checks, credential renewals, and processing refunds.

To address this current issue, the DOH proposes a COVID-19 recovery staffing plan to add the necessary project-based staff to improve credentialing performance across the health professions and facilities, with the goal to issue credentials within seven (7) calendar days of having a complete application within 90 working days from the time staff are hired. The department requests \$2.5 million to hire 34 project FTE to accomplish this plan. This estimate is based on the average total of touch-time to process a completed application and a credential renewal as well as time to fully train staff once hired.

If this decision package is not funded, recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will take significantly longer to resolve. The backlog will continue to exist. Credentialing health care professionals will continue to take longer than pre-COVID cycle times, and delayed credentialing of health care professionals may result in decreased access to care, cancellation of medical services, and facility staff shortages.

Failure to maintain prompt credentialing will increase backlogs in applications and result in frustrated applicants, community members, legislators, professional associations, and other organizations.

It will also lead to increased volume of phone calls and email inquiries, which pull staff away from credentialing and exacerbates the backlog.

Equity Impacts

All Washington residents will benefit from improvements in access to care resulting from faster credentialing of health care professionals. The proposal will especially benefit residents in underserved areas where delays in access to care is a disparity gap compared to larger population centers.

Assumptions and Calculations

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

This project is a temporary expansion of the Department of Health’s credentialing capacity to address pandemic driven delays and backlog.

Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:

See Financial Calculator

Workforce Assumptions:

JOB CODE MASTER	Monthly Salary	2022	2023	2024	2025	2021-23 BIENNIUM	6 YEAR IMPACT
Health Services Consultant 3 = 1.8 FTE	6,063	127,323				127,323	
Health Services Consultant 2 = 4.7 FTE	5,361	300,216				300,216	
Health Services Consultant 1 = 12.3 FTE	4,509	662,823				662,823	
Forms & Records Analyst 1 = 1.2 FTE	3,701	51,814				51,814	
TOTAL SALARIES		1,142,176				1,142,176	
BENEFITS							
Standard Benefits as a Percentage of Total Salaries		467,690				467,690	

How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?

Equity Impacts

All Washington residents will benefit from improvements in access to care resulting from faster credentialing of health care professionals. The proposal will especially benefit residents in underserved areas where delays in access to care is a disparity gap compared to larger population centers.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic Framework:

This proposal supports the Governor’s Results Washington goal areas of healthy and safe communities and efficient, effective and accountable government and the agency priority of equity.

- Timely processing of applications for credentials allows health care professionals to more rapidly enter the health care workforce and increases access to care.
- Speeding up credentialing will help to mitigate the impact of the severe shortages in workforce that currently exist throughout the health care and behavioral health systems.

Performance Outcomes:

The expected result is to reduce the backlog and issue credentials within seven (7) days of having a complete application within 90 working days following completion of staff training. This would be accomplished within seven (7) months of receiving funding.

Other Collateral Connections

Puget Sound Recovery:

N/A

State Workforce Impacts:

N/A

Intergovernmental:

N/A

Legal or Administrative Mandates:

N/A

Stakeholder Response:

Partner	Anticipated Position (Support, Neutral, Oppose)
Internal Staff (Office of Health Professions)	Support
Boards/Commissions/Advisory Committees	Support
Health Care Authority	Support
Department of Social and Health Services	Support
Governor’s Office	Support
Tribal Nations	Neutral
Washington State Nurses Association	Support
Washington Home Care Associations (Home Care Aids, Hospice, In-Home Services)	Support
Washington State Medical Association	Support
SEIU	Support
Universities & Colleges	Support
Washington State Hospital Association	Support
Washington Ambulatory Surgery Centers Association	Support
Other health profession associations	Support

Changes from Current Law:

N/A

State Facilities Impacts:

N/A

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	\$1,472	\$0	\$1,472	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. B	\$608	\$0	\$608	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. E	\$119	\$0	\$119	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. J	\$139	\$0	\$139	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. T	\$150	\$0	\$150	\$0	\$0	\$0

Agency Contact Information

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