



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH**

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June 13, 2007

To: Washington State Board of Health Members

From: Treuman Katz, Chair, State Board of Health

SUBJECT: **REVISIONS TO THE MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS**

**Background and Summary**

At its last meeting, the State Board of Health briefly discussed, as part of its review of a proposed framework for strategic planning, its existing mission statement and vision statement. Both of these statements first appeared in the Final 2005 Five-Year Strategic Plan and were carried forward in the Preliminary 2007 Five-Year Strategic Plan.

In the May discussion, Board members discussed ways that each could be improved. Some Board members felt the mission statement was not strong enough. It did not reflect adequately the Board's role as a leader, convener, and initiator in the policy development process. With regard to the vision statement, concerns was expressed that the reader could define *health* too narrowly and not understand the Board's expanded sense of health, which encompasses mental, social, and emotional well being. At the same time, some members wanted to keep the vision statement as simple, clear, and direct as possible, and others spoke to the need to keep the mission and vision consistent over time. The Board agreed additional discussion on both items was warranted. Staff agreed to work with individual members who expressed concerns and to bring proposed revisions back to the Board today.

The discussion section of this memo describes both the existing mission and vision statements as well as revisions proposed by staff that attempt to reflect the May discussion and can serve as a starting point for today's discussion. I have asked Executive Director Craig McLaughlin to facilitate today's discussion. My desire is that the Board will agree today on a mission statement and a vision statement that can be incorporated into the working draft of the 2007 Five-Year Strategic Plan. The Board will have another chance to review and approve these statements when the full plan comes before it for adoption, most likely in October.

**Recommended Board Action**

The Chair will entertain separate motions to adopt a mission statement and a vision statement.

## Discussion

### Mission Statement

The Board's current mission statement reads:

*The Board's mission is to provide statewide leadership in advancing policies that protect and improve the public's health.*

*This mission is achieved by:*

- *Reviewing and monitoring the health status of all people in Washington;*
- *Analyzing policies, providing guidance, and developing rules;*
- *Promoting system partnerships; and*
- *Encouraging public engagement in the health system.*

In the May discussion, some Board members suggested the tone implied the Board was more passive than it really is or should be, and wanted to see the mission statement strengthened to reflect more of a leadership role for the Board. Others supported keeping the mission statement as written, and pointed out that the Board often is reactive as public health issues emerge. This discussion is captured in the May minutes, which are included in your meeting materials.

Staff discussion led to a proposal for a revised mission statement that was then sent out for review by members VanDusen and Crump who had volunteered to help. The proposal was then revised again in an effort to reflect their comments.

The following proposal is offered as a starting point for today's discussion:

*The Board's mission is to provide statewide leadership in developing and promoting policies that protect and improve the public's health.*

*This mission is achieved by:*

- *Reviewing and monitoring the health status of all people in Washington;*
- *Initiating and supporting policy development, analyzing policy proposals, providing guidance, and developing rules;*
- *Promoting system partnerships; and*
- *Fostering public participation in shaping the health system.*

Vision Statement

The Board's current vision statement reads:

*“Our vision is that the health and safety of all people in Washington will improve.”*

Discussion about this statement at the May meeting was very brief. Board members commented that people could interpret health too narrowly, and not read into it some of the things the Board cares about—like healthy families, healthy communities, healthy behaviors, dental health, mental health, and social and emotional well being. In particular, well being was mentioned. There have been many attempts to define health broadly. One of the best known is from the preamble to the 1946 Constitution of the World Health Organization, which reads, “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

Other members mentioned at the May meeting that vision statements should be clear and direct, and said they liked the simplicity and brevity of the current statement.

With this in mind, the staff recommendation is that the vision statement not attempt to define health, but that the concept of well being be incorporated. The proposed statement would read:

*“Our vision is that the health, safety, and well being of all people in Washington will improve.”*