



**Washington State
Association of Counties**
The Voice of Washington Counties

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Sonja Hallum
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Nick Brown
General Counsel
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Dear Sonja and Nick:

In 2016, the Washington State Association of Counties spearheaded the effort to pass SSB 6430 (2016) which codified one of the Adult Behavioral Health Task Force recommendations and was part of the greater health care integration effort. This law, specifically RCW 74.09.670, directs the Health Care Authority (HCA) to suspend, rather than terminate, medical assistance benefits for persons who are incarcerated or committed to a state hospital by July 1, 2017. The implementation of this process is important to the successful reintegration of persons incarcerated in prison or jail and is expected to reduce recidivism and readmission, thereby saving the entire system money.

You can imagine our disappointment when HCA announced its decision to only implement this law for prisons and not county or city jails. While we expected this directive to go into effect on July 1, 2017, as required by statute, we have been informed by HCA that they will be "pausing" this project for jails based on a lack of funding.

This turn of events is extremely disappointing and somewhat surprising. We worked through the interim on a workgroup, led by HCA, dedicated to this effort. The HCA never raised funding as an issue. Counties do not have the leverage over the HCA that the Governor's Office does to require the HCA to comply with the law. We hope that you can help us get this program back on track for a July 1st start date.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Juliana Roe
Washington State
Association of Counties

Candice Bock
Association of Washington
Cities

Tom McBride
Washington Association of
Prosecuting Attorneys