

SUPPORTING EQUITABLE HEALTHCARE: RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ESTABLISHING A KITSAP COUNTY PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT

WHEREAS, the Alliance for Equitable Healthcare (AEH) is a group of Kitsap County residents launched in December 2021 whose primary goal is to bring access to affordable, comprehensive and equitable healthcare to the county; and

WHEREAS, AEH organized working groups beginning in October 2022 to explore what it would take to form a Kitsap County Public Hospital District—a community-created governmental entity authorized by state law to deliver health services beyond acute hospital care; ; (See [Chapter 70.44 RCW: Public hospital districts](#). Revised Code of Washington), and

WHEREAS, the March 2024 “Healthcare System Challenges and Opportunities in Kitsap County” report commissioned by the Kitsap Public Health Board recommended that the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners, the Kitsap Public Health Board and other stakeholders launch a formal commission within the next year to explore the feasibility of forming a public hospital district, and a Johns Hopkins School of Medicine report listed exploration of a public health district as one of eight measures to improve healthcare access in Kitsap County; (See [Meyer, D., Ravi, S. J., & Veenema, T. G. \(2024\). Healthcare system challenges in Kitsap County](#). Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security), and

WHEREAS, consolidation and staffing shortages have left a scarcity of primary care, prenatal, mental health and other providers in Kitsap County and problems getting healthcare are well documented; a public hospital district would create a sustainable funding mechanism to rationalize how healthcare is supported and to address local needs; and

WHEREAS, public hospital districts are governmental entities established by Washington state statute; nearly half of Washington’s hospitals are part of such districts; they are authorized not only to operate hospitals but to deliver any service that helps people stay healthy—physically, socially and mentally; being owned and governed by local citizens, they tailor services to meet the unique needs of their communities; and Kitsap is one of the few counties in the West Sound region without a public hospital district; and

WHEREAS, Washington has 56 public hospital districts and roughly one-quarter do not even own hospitals, using district funds for varied health services; property taxes are the main funding mechanism and levy rates typically range from 25 to 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, raising about \$22 million annually in Kitsap at the average levy rate of 35 cents; (See [Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts. \(n.d.\).](#) and [Kitsap County Assessor’s Office. \(n.d.\).](#)), and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Kitsap County Democratic Party, support the formation of a Kitsap County Public Hospital District as a means to provide sustainable funding for expanded healthcare services—including primary care, reproductive health, mental health and other essential services—in alignment with the Washington State Democratic Party’s commitment to universal, equitable healthcare; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Kitsap County Democratic Party urges the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners to take all necessary steps to place a measure creating such a district on the November 2026 ballot for voter consideration consistent with state law; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Kitsap County Democratic Party will collaborate with the Alliance for Equitable Healthcare, labor unions, community organizations, healthcare providers and other interested parties to educate residents about the benefits of a public hospital district and to advocate for equitable, community-based healthcare funding for all Kitsap County residents.

Tom Slyter, Chair Kitsap County Democrats

Author, Alliance for Equitable Health Care

Approved by KCDCC 9/15/2025