

# **Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities**

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## **PROPOSED SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES**

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STATE OF WASHINGTON  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND  
REVIEW COMMITTEE

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## **Why a JLARC Review of the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities?**

In 2005, the Legislature's Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities issued a report that identified health disparities for certain conditions and diseases, highlighted social determinants, and called for the creation of an interagency coordinating council.

In 2006, the Legislature created the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities (SSB 6197). The legislation identified the work to be done by the Council and directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to review the Council and its functions.

## **What are Health Disparities?**

Health disparities refer to differences between population groups in the rate of certain diseases, rate of deaths from those diseases, or lack of access to health services. These groups may be based on factors such as race, ethnicity, or gender. Studies have shown that social determinants such as education and employment are associated with health disparities.

In stating its intent, the Legislature expressed particular concern regarding health disparities for women and people of color in comparison to men and the general population.

## **Council Membership and Responsibilities**

The 17-member Council is housed at the State Board of Health, which provides staff and funding. Council members represent state agencies and commissions, as well as the public. The Council must reflect diversity in race, ethnicity, and gender.

The Legislature directed the Council to perform the following work:

- Promote and facilitate communication, coordination, and collaboration among relevant state agencies and other private or public stakeholders to address health disparities;
- Gather information to understand how the actions of state government improve or contribute to health disparities;
- Assess and recommend initiatives for improving availability of culturally appropriate health literature and interpretive services at public and private health-related agencies;
- Create and regularly update an action plan and statewide policy to address factors that lead to health disparities;
- Establish advisory committees that reflect diversity in race, ethnicity, and gender; and
- Provide regular progress reports to the Governor and Legislature.

## Study Scope

JLARC staff will review and report on the operations and progress of the Governor’s Interagency Council on Health Disparities. As directed in law, the review will use a process substantially the same as a sunset review (RCW 43.131.071). However, since the statute does not include a termination clause, the JLARC staff report will not evaluate if the Council should be terminated.

## Study Objectives

JLARC staff will address the following objectives:

1. To what extent has the Council complied with legislative intent, including requirements for diverse membership, culturally appropriate health literature, timely reporting, and action plan development?
2. To what extent does the Council provide for efficient and economical operations?
3. To what extent have the Council’s actions achieved expected performance goals and targets?
4. To what extent does the Council duplicate the activities of another agency or the private sector?

## Timeframe for the Study

Staff will present the preliminary report at the JLARC meeting in September 2016. The final report will be presented at the JLARC meeting in December 2016.

## JLARC Staff Contact for the Study

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