



## Puget Sound Background

The following information gives you some perspective on how health care affects our region. The information below is presented to provide you with background for the discussions.

### Statistics for Washington State:

- Over 550,000 uninsured men, women, and children live in Washington
- Over 132,000 of them live in King County
- 34% of the uninsured are at or below poverty level, and another 30% are just above the poverty level
- Rates can also be broken down by ethnic group - 28% American Indians/Native Alaskans are uninsured, versus 8% of Caucasians
- Uninsured individuals cost the state \$318 million annually through charity care or uncompensated care provided by hospitals and doctors
- Of that, King County covers \$86 million - \$28 million in charity care and \$58 million in uncompensated care
- Self employed workers make up about 35% of the uninsured but they comprise only 8% of the state population. (Washington Citizen Action: <http://www.wacitizenaction.org/hc/shc.htm>)

Washington and King County are working to address this at different levels

- **Healthy Incentives Program** ([http://www.metrokc.gov/employees/health\\_matters/hip.aspx](http://www.metrokc.gov/employees/health_matters/hip.aspx)) – King County Employees receive three levels (bronze, silver, and gold) of out of pocket expenses based on annual, voluntary, confidential wellness assessments. Participants can earn points by improving their lifestyle through healthy eating, exercise, not smoking, and limiting drinking. As points increase participants move to levels with lower out of pocket expenses.
- The county has also implemented a variety of community outreach programs to educate immigrants, women, children, minorities, and the poor about how to access health care services. Below is a listing of some programs available. For more programs visit the **King County Public Health** website at <http://www.metrokc.gov/health>.
  - **Basic Health** (<http://www.basichealth.hca.wa.gov/>) – Provides low cost insurance for Washington residents.
  - **Community Health Services** (<http://www.chs.hca.wa.gov/>) – Provides help for the uninsured, underinsured, and tribes to get access to quality and affordable health care.
  - **Cross Cultural Health Care Program (CCHCP)** (<http://www.xculture.org/>) & **EthnoMed** (<http://www.ethnomed.org/>) enhance communication between citizens and health care providers so that citizens get access to health care that is culturally and linguistically appropriate.
  - **Take Charge** (<http://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/maa/familyplan/index.html>) – Provides birth-control and family planning for low income men and women in King County.
  - Programs that address specific needs
    - **ABCD Oral Health** – dental health of children up to 5 years

- [Reach 2010](#) – diabetes in minority communities
  - [Vaccines for Children](#) – routine immunizations for children from 6 months through 18 years
  - [Kids get Care, Teen Clinics](#) or [Teen Clinics](#), [Women's clinics](#), [GLBT Clinics](#), [Clinics for those living with AIDS](#), [Clinics for the homeless](#)
  - [Planned Parenthood](#) – birth-control, family planning, prenatal care, and more
- Proposed Bills that are before the State Legislature
  - [Pooling Risk Reducing Cost](#)
  - <http://www.insurance.wa.gov/legislative/factsheets/PoolingRiskReducingCost.asp> – this would reduce the risk assumed by insurance companies, thus reducing premiums. Some of the money that the insurance companies save will be used to provide compensated health care to the uninsured. It is projected to decrease uninsured by 12,600 individuals and decrease average premiums by \$104.
  - **Washington Fair Share** – this legislation mandates that large employers must provide health care to employees who work more than 86 hours a month. It will decrease uninsured by 109,000 individuals and decrease state-provided care for the uninsured by \$29 million.
  - **Care for Kids** – this will provide preventative care thus decreasing the amount of extreme care children will need over their lifetime. This program will cover 87,000 children and reduce uncompensated care by \$24 million.
  - Combined:
    - Statewide – these bills are projected to decrease uninsured by over 204,000 and decrease uncompensated costs by \$77 million.
    - King County – these bills are projected to decrease uninsured by over 78,000 (56%) and decrease uncompensated costs by \$30 million.