

**WHATCOM COUNTY
EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE**

County Courthouse
311 Grand Avenue, Suite #108
Bellingham, WA 98225-4082



Pete Kremen
County Executive

February 6, 2004

The Honorable Gary Locke
Governor of the State of Washington
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

RE: WA Medicaid Integration Partnership (WMIP)

Dear Governor Locke:

Whatcom County wholeheartedly supports the concept of service and funding integration. We are intrigued with the possibility of applying the service integration concept to improving the service system funded by Medicaid. In fact, I applaud any efforts to bring the Medicaid integration concept into being.

However I am concerned about current efforts by the Department of Social and Health Services to test this concept in Snohomish County. These efforts appear to be premature, and they are likely to result in numerous unintended negative impacts on our residents here in Whatcom County. If these premature efforts fail, they may be harmful to future Medicaid integration efforts in this state.

Throughout Northwest Washington we have a highly complex network of inter-related health services. The transition from our current networked service status to a fully integrated Medicaid service system will require considerable planning in direct partnership with the local counties involved, and likely including numerous other stakeholders statewide. The potential for unintended negative impacts on our residents is simply too large.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you withdraw the DSHS Request For Proposals for the Washington Medicaid Integration Partnership (WMIP) in Snohomish County. I would suggest that you remove the related budget proviso. Finally I suggest that DSHS continue its efforts toward implementing a fully integrated Medicaid service system, and to plan future projects with the full partnership of stakeholders throughout the counties or regions involved.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Kremen", is written over a circular stamp that partially overlaps the "Sincerely," text.

Pete Kremen
Whatcom County Executive

c: Secretary Braddock