



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

PO Box 47990 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7990

January 16, 2008

The Honorable Eileen Cody, Chair
House Health Care & Wellness Committee
337 John L. O'Brien Building
Post Office Box 40600
Olympia, Washington 98504-0600

Dear Representative Cody:

I am writing as chair of the Washington State Board of Health to support the concept of House Bill 2549, which is scheduled to be heard by your committee this morning. The bill would establish pilot projects to promote patient-centered care. Specifically, it would require the Health Care Authority to provide funding and technical assistance for health care providers to encourage them to adopt the medical home care model.

A medical home delivers health care in an accessible and continuous, coordinated and comprehensive, family-centered, and compassionate and culturally sensitive manner. Benefits include cost savings and better health outcomes. The Board supports efforts to encourage a medical home for everyone, especially children.

One of the Board's strategic goals is to increase access to preventive services, and the medical home model appears to increase the likelihood that preventive care, such as immunizations and screenings, will be delivered in a timely, appropriate, and consistent manner.

Another of its strategic goals is to reduce health disparities. A 2006 Commonwealth Fund study found that when adults have access to health insurance and medical homes, racial and ethnic disparities in access and quality are reduced or even eliminated.

The Board also supports efforts to study the supply of primary care providers.

The Board can only support the bill in concept at this time for two reasons. First, it is not in the Governor's budget, and second, we do not know at this time whether the Health

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Care Authority or other agencies named in this legislation might choose to recommend amendments.

Thank you for considering this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Treuman Katz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Treuman Katz
Chair

cc: House Health Care & Wellness Committee Members
The Honorable Karen Keiser, State Senate
State Board of Health Members
Ms. Christina Hulet, Governor's Executive Policy Office
Mr. Jonathan Seib, Governor's Executive Policy Office
Mr. Roger Gantz, Department of Social and Health Services
Mr. Richard Onizuka, Health Care Authority
Mr. Brian Peyton, Department of Health
Mr. Craig McLaughlin, State Board of Health