

**CITY OF SEATTLE**

**RESOLUTION 32074**

A RESOLUTION supporting the Whole Washington State Universal Healthcare Initiative.

WHEREAS, Article 25 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets forth

that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control establishes a fundamental right to healthcare<sup>1</sup>”; and

WHEREAS, in Washington State, 430,000<sup>2</sup> have no health coverage and even more residents are underinsured, and lives would be saved by ensuring universal access to healthcare; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the negative ramifications of tying healthcare to employment; and

WHEREAS, the Whole Washington Health Trust bill, sponsored by seven Washington State Senators, guaranteeing a non-profit, universal healthcare system for all Washingtonians, with a funding mechanism devised by a noted economist<sup>3</sup>, reviewed by the Department of Revenue and the Employment Securities Department, demonstrates that Washington State residents will save billions of dollars annually when universal healthcare is implemented; and

WHEREAS, the passage of I-1471 in Washington State will support the state and national

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr\\_booklet\\_en\\_web.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.insurance.wa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2021-uninsured-report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://wholewashington.org/friedman-financial-analysis-2021/>

1 efforts to establish Medicare for All: in December, 2021 the Washington State Universal  
2 Health Care Commission was established to further study implementation in this state  
3 and in May of 2022 15 U.S. Senators introduced a Medicare for All Act, endorsed by  
4 "more than 60 major organizations" across the U.S.<sup>4</sup>; and

5 WHEREAS, the January 15, 2021 Universal Health Care Work Group's report to the  
6 Washington State Legislature included "Option A," "which found that a state-governed  
7 and administered program for all state residents" in Washington State would save an  
8 "Estimated implementation year savings [of]: \$2.5 billion [and an] Estimated annual  
9 steady state savings [of]: \$5.6 billion/year" in total public and private health care  
10 spending<sup>5</sup>; and

11 WHEREAS, in 2017, the U.S. spent twice as much on health care (17.1 percent of GDP) as  
12 comparable Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development countries  
13 (OECD) (8.8 percent of GDP), all of whom have universal health care. In terms of dollars  
14 spent, in 2017, the average per capita health care spending of OECD countries [with  
15 universal health care] is \$3,558, while in the U.S. it is \$10,207 – nearly three times as  
16 costly<sup>6</sup>; and

17 WHEREAS, according to the Commonwealth Health Fund, in the U.S., infant mortality is  
18 higher, and the life span is shorter than among all comparable economies that provide  
19 universal health care<sup>7</sup>; and

20 WHEREAS, "Black women face three times the maternal mortality risk as white women" in the

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20220512006129/en/AHF-Endorses-Sen.-Sanders%E2%80%99-New-%E2%80%98Medicare-for-All-Act%E2%80%99>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/program/final-universal-health-care-work-group-legislative-report.pdf> [p. 8]

<sup>6</sup> <https://health.usnews.com/health-care/for-better/articles/the-case-for-universal-health-care>

<sup>7</sup> <https://health.usnews.com/health-care/for-better/articles/the-case-for-universal-health-care>

1 U.S. With an overall 23.8 deaths per 100,000 live births for all women, the U.S. statistic  
2 is nearly three times higher than France, the second highest among industrialized  
3 nations<sup>8</sup>; and

4 WHEREAS, a Kaiser Family Foundation analysis of federal data "estimated that collective  
5 medical debt [in the U.S.] totaled at least \$195 billion in 2019, larger than the economy  
6 of Greece.<sup>9</sup>"; and

7 WHEREAS, from 2012 to 2016, prices for medical care surged 16 percent, almost four times the  
8 rate of overall inflation, a report by the nonprofit Health Care Cost Institute found<sup>10</sup>; and

9 WHEREAS, the Urban Institute shows that nationwide, according to the poll, Black adults are 50  
10 percent more likely and Hispanic adults 35 percent more likely than whites to owe  
11 money for care. Women are more likely than men to be in [medical] debt<sup>11</sup>; and

12 WHEREAS, people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQI people, women, and low-income  
13 people are the most likely to lack affordable, comprehensive healthcare<sup>12</sup>; and

14 WHEREAS, "In 2021, the Washington State Nurses Association (WSNA) joined health care  
15 unions SEIU 1199NW and UFCW 21, which represent more than 71,000 healthcare  
16 workers in the state, to form WA Safe + Healthy. This coalition called on Washington  
17 State legislators to pass safe staffing standards for the health and safety of workers and  
18 patients." The legislature failed to pass this bill<sup>13</sup>; and

19 WHEREAS, in the Washington State 2021-22 Legislative session the "Keep Our Care Act" was  
20 introduced and supported by the ACLU, unions, and patient rights' advocates. "The bill

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<sup>8</sup> <https://tcf.org/content/commentary/worsening-u-s-maternal-health-crisis-three-graphs/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/report/kff-health-care-debt-survey/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://khn.org/news/article/diagnosis-debt-investigation-100-million-americans-hidden-medical-debt/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/which-county-characteristics-predict-medical-debt>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/whatis/index.html>

<sup>13</sup> <https://nurse.org/articles/nurse-safe-staffing-washington-state/>

1 included: A prohibition on health entity consolidations that diminish access to affordable  
2 quality care. The Keep Our Care Act would ensure health entity mergers, acquisitions,  
3 and contracting affiliations improve rather than harm access to affordable quality care  
4 within a community." This Washington State Legislature failed to pass these  
5 bills<sup>14</sup>; NOW, THEREFORE,

6 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE THAT:**

7 Section 1. The Seattle City Council endorses the people's efforts to pass Improved  
8 Medicare for All through Whole Washington's state-wide initiative I-1471<sup>15</sup>; United States  
9 Senate Bill 4204 ("S. 4204"), "A bill to establish a Medicare-for-all national health insurance  
10 program"; and United States House Bill 1976 ("H.R. 1976"), "A bill to establish an improved  
11 Medicare for All national health insurance program."

12 Section 2. The Seattle City Council urges the Universal Health Care Commission to  
13 adopt "Option A" from the Universal Health Care Work Groups' report to the Legislature in  
14 January of 2021<sup>16</sup>; and for Washington State lawmakers to pass a Medicare-for-All trust and  
15 statewide insurance program until such time that a national Medicare-for-All health insurance  
16 program is enacted.

17 Section 3. The Seattle City Council urges federal elected officials to pass Medicare-for-  
18 All national legislation. The Seattle City Council urges Democrats in the U.S. Congress to use  
19 their full power, to vote for such legislation and their resources to build collegial grassroots  
20 action to pass it.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.aclu-wa.org/KOCA>

<sup>15</sup> <https://wholewashington.org/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://hca.wa.gov/assets/program/final-universal-health-care-work-group-legislative-report.pdf> [p. 8]

1           Section 4. The Seattle City Council requests that the Office of Intergovernmental  
2 Relations convey this resolution to the Washington State legislators; the Governor of  
3 Washington; the Washington State Universal Healthcare Commission; the Washington State  
4 Department of Health, Health Equity Division; and Washington State federal Congressional  
5 delegation.  
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Adopted by the City Council the 6th day of December, 2022,  
and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this 6th day of  
December, 2022.



President Pro Tem of the City Council

Filed by me this 6th day of December, 2022.



Elizabeth M. Adkisson, Interim City Clerk

(Seal)