



Adequately Resource the Washington Medical Coordination Center

The Problem

As the COVID-19 pandemic surged across Washington State, hospitals immediately understood the need for an organization to coordinate limited health care resources across the state. Washington State led the nation in developing a resource to match patients to available beds and ensure that none of our hospitals were overwhelmed when there were resources available in another part of the state. The Washington Medical Coordination Center (WMCC), housed at Harborview Medical Center, is the organization that provides this coordination across jurisdictional boundaries and health care organizations. The WMCC has been a life-saving resource for the people of Washington and other states have since followed our lead in developing this resource.

The Department of Health (DOH) contracted with the WMCC to coordinate hospital resources during the pandemic, using one-time federal funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP). This funding was exhausted during the first year of the pandemic.

Although this funding was initially intended for a short-term pandemic response, WMCC is an on-going, long-term service that supports all Washington State acute care facilities. WMCC’s services are coordinated by experienced medical professionals that have firsthand knowledge of available resources and required logistics needed for capacity management and patient care. WMCC requires state funding to maintain this resource for the duration of the current public health emergency, future public health emergencies, and ongoing health care resource coordination.

Proposed Solution

WSHA supports the DOH budget request for funding to continue the WMCC contract through 2023. This budget request is fully funded by federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Budget Ask

\$1,283,000 appropriation to the Department of Health to contract with the WMCC through June 2023.

Initiative	Summary	Total state funds per biennium	Total federal funds per biennium
Fund WMCC Contract	Fund the WMCC contract from Jan 2022 – June 2023. DOH estimates the WMCC will facilitate 15 patient transfers and field over 200 calls from hospitals every month during this period.	\$0	\$1,283,000

Key Messages

- Washington State is one of the only states that coordinated all hospitals across the state to level-load patients and share resources to ensure that no hospital had to enter crisis standards of care – rationing life-saving treatments – during the pandemic. It was a remarkable feat that the WMCC was able to be stood up so quickly, and we should plan ahead for the next potential health care resource emergency.
- This initiative can be fully funded with federal pandemic relief funds. This is exactly the type of program for which these funds are intended.
- This program ensures Washingtonians in every community across the state – whether urban or rural and regardless of local acute care resources – have access to life-saving hospital care.

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