



## King County

### **Dow Constantine**

King County Executive

401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800

Seattle, WA 98104-1818

**206-263-9600** Fax 206-296-0194

TTY Relay: 711

[www.kingcounty.gov](http://www.kingcounty.gov)

August 1, 2023

The Honorable Dave Upthegrove  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

This letter transmits the Recommended Program Plan for Harborview Medical Center Health and Safety Improvements in response to Ordinance 19583, along with a proposed Motion that, if enacted, would approve the report.

It is undisputed that Harborview Medical Center is an indispensable local, state, and inter-state public hospital providing access to excellent health care for the most vulnerable and marginalized populations. Its dedicated staff and providers continue to provide the highest quality care to patients in outdated, inefficient, and run-down facilities.

In 2020, the Harborview Leadership Group recognized Harborview's facility limitations and recommended a number of improvements for the medical center. The voters of King County agreed, approving to pay for an array of health and safety upgrades at Harborview. Yet, the unforeseen economic impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic, and the resulting cost escalation, have made Harborview's 2020 envisioned facility upgrades infeasible to accomplish within existing bond revenues.

Comprised of representatives from UW Medicine, Harborview's Board of Trustees, the King County Council, and my office, the Ordinance Workgroup established by Ordinance 19583 has completed its task with the submittal of this report. It has developed a recommended Program Plan for the 2020 Harborview bond to support facility and infrastructure improvements at Harborview Medical Center that can be built within the amount of the bond revenues estimated to be available and as authorized by Ordinance 19117.

Through the Ordinance Workgroup (OWG) process, Harborview is requesting additional single patient beds beyond the number originally planned in the 2020 Bond. This request is made due to growing and projected single patient room demand and the ability for the hospital to meet needed vital surge capacity while addressing the "difficult to discharge" issue. Difficult to discharge patients are those who no longer need hospital levels of acute medical care, but who

The Honorable Dave Upthegrove

August 1, 2023

Page 2

remain in Harborview because there is no place to safely discharge them to lower levels of care. The difficult to discharge patients also compound the hospital's bed capacity constraints because acute care beds are occupied by less acute patients. As a group, the OWG coalesced around prioritizing additional single patient beds and a new tower given Harborview's growing demand for beds and the expansion of its licensed bed numbers from 413 beds in 2020 to 500 beds in 2023 and 540 when the Maleng Single Patient Bed Project is completed.<sup>1</sup> Harborview projects that, by 2031, it will need 684 beds and 740 by 2040. As identified by the Harborview Leadership Group in 2020, single patient beds provide for better infection control, patient safety, and quality of care.

Understanding that Harborview's mission and serving mission population are paramount, and that each recommendation impacted the mission population in one way or another, the OWG identified a recommended Program Plan that maximizes what the \$1.74 billion bond can do now to serve the highest needs of the hospital and the County. This group confronted the very tough and multipronged challenges of a shrinking dollar, growing costs, and expansion of needs since the 2020 Harborview Leadership Group made its recommendations. The enclosed report includes additional guidance that the OWG provides to the County as to the order in which unfunded facility needs could be addressed should new funds become available.

I am grateful for the time and effort that the OWG dedicated to developing the recommendation called for by Ordinance 19583. I also thank the myriad of staff from UW Medicine and our County staff who worked diligently together to provide data and information to the Workgroup so that it could complete its task.

Thank you for your consideration of this report and proposed Ordinance. If your staff have questions, please contact Kelli Carroll, Director of Special Projects, at 206-477-0876.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers  
    ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff  
        Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council  
Karan Gill, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive  
Mina Hashemi, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive  
Kelli Carroll, Director of Special Projects, Office of the Executive

---

<sup>1</sup> Maleng Single Patient Bed Project will deliver up to 40 new single patient rooms by converting two floors in the Maleng Building into inpatient units. Bond funds are not used for the Maleng Project.