

Media Advisory – Sept. 30, 2009

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New funding source will aid countywide human services

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon has forwarded a plan for the County Council's approval that will increase funding toward the community's mental-health, chemical-dependency and housing needs.

Earlier this year, the County Council approved the local option 1/10th of 1 percent program, which provides sales tax revenue to tackle various human services.

Based on recommendations from the Chemical Dependency/Mental Health Sales Tax Board, more than \$1.5 million of new funding will provide housing for low-income families and individuals under the proposal. Another \$1.8 million will allow the county to expand chemical-dependency and mental-health programs as well as the county's drug court program. Crisis services programs will receive an additional \$500,000 among the numerous human services that will use funds from this program.

“These services are not only the right thing to do, they are also proven to reduce much greater community costs when we fail to meet these needs, including driving up visits to our emergency rooms, homeless shelters and county jail,” Reardon said. “I want to thank the members of the review board who looked at our vast array of needs and recommended the most efficient and effective tools to tackle those necessities.”

The Chemical Dependency Mental Health Sales Tax Board held a series of community meetings during the past nine months to solicit input on enhancing, improving and sustaining chemical-dependency and mental-health services in Snohomish County.

In 2005, the Washington State Legislature passed the Omnibus Mental Health and Substance Abuse Act. One aspect of this law was to allow counties to increase the sales tax by 1/10th of 1 percent. Money is to be used for chemical-dependency and mental-health services, including therapeutic courts. The Snohomish County Council passed an ordinance instituting that tax increase in December 2008.

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