



King County

Reagan Dunn

Councilmember, District 9

Metropolitan King County Council

August 23, 2019

Paul Hayes
Executive Director
Harborview Medical Center

Lisa Brandenburg
Chief health system officer
UW Medicine

Dear Paul Hayes and Lisa Brandenburg:

I want to thank you for presenting your annual report to the Council on Monday and express my continued interest in increasing Harborview's role in serving our most vulnerable populations through the provision of mental health and addiction recovery services.

As you know, King County is experiencing a homelessness crisis, with over 11,000 people experiencing homelessness across the County. You may also be aware that over the last few months, a number of high-profile treatment facilities have closed their doors. According to King County's 2019 Count Us In survey, 32% of homeless persons suffer from substance dependence, and 36% suffer from psychiatric or emotional conditions, including PTSD. In addition, opioid related deaths in King County have increased annually since 2015.

We need to do a better job helping people in crisis recover from addiction and mental health crises. One of the most acute needs that we have as a region is more capacity to provide addiction recovery services and beds. Harborview and UW Medicine are in a unique position to assist with our homelessness crisis through the provision of mental health and addiction recovery services. When a person comes to a hospital in crisis, we owe it to our community to provide them with the greatest chance of future success.

As you continue to plan the expansion and improvements of the Harborview Medical campus, I am asking you to provide more capacity to serve those in mental health or drug related crisis. I believe any plan you put forward should have a substantial component specifically aimed at the providing these services and helping to alleviate the County's homelessness crisis.

In the coming weeks, I'll be reaching out to you and your leadership to discuss ways in which Harborview activities may enhance the public's ability to reach these targeted groups. I look forward to our conversation in that regard.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reagan Dunn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Reagan Dunn
Vice Chair
Metropolitan King County Council