



Washington State Department of Health

# 2026 Agency Legislative and Budget Requests

August 2025

## Agency Request Legislation

### *Opioid Treatment Program Accrediting Body Sustainability*

Federal law requires behavioral health agencies certified for Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) services to become accredited by an accrediting body approved by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA). The department has offered this essential accreditation service to opioid treatment programs at no cost to those programs. However, the funding sources for these services are not eligible to be supported by licensing fees and they have reduced available funding to support other key department activities. This bill will authorize the department to charge a fee for accreditation services, creating a stable and long-term funding source and enabling the department to continue to offer these important services to accredit more opioid treatment programs.

### *Updating Federal Standards for Preventative Services*

State statutes currently rely on recommendations from several national bodies to determine coverage for preventative services including immunizations. As the uncertainty around federal recommendations grows, concerns about ongoing access to these services are also growing. The Department of Health is working with sister agencies and the Governor's office to propose legislation that will move authority to recommend preventative services to the state. This will include reviewing science-based evidence and working with local health officers and other appropriate experts to develop recommendations.

## Budget Requests

### *Newborn Screening Fees*

Laboratory, support, and personnel costs at the Newborn Screening Lab have increased significantly over the last five years. DOH is requesting a fee increase to ensure that the department can continue to provide testing services for Washington newborns as required in law.

### *Fees for Shellfish*

DOH conducted an economic impact assessment of the Shellfish Licensing and Certification Program and determined current fees are not generating sufficient revenue to cover operating costs. DOH is requesting a fee adjustment to address existing program deficits, reductions in funding from General Fund – State and increased costs of business.

### *Certificate of Need*

The certificate of need program is a regulatory program that approves proposals to establish or expand certain facilities or health care services. Currently, this program is facing a revenue shortfall, driven primarily by a significant reduction in application requests in the post-COVID era. DOH is requesting funding to sustain the program.

### *Trauma System IT*

One of the essential tools that keeps Washington's trauma system functioning is the statewide Trauma Registry. This platform, however, was established in 1994 and is currently out of compliance with state data security requirements. DOH is requesting funding to upgrade this registry to meet this need.

### *988 Call Centers*

Washington's 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline offers around-the-clock support for suicide prevention and behavioral health crises through call, text, and chat services. However, crisis centers are currently underfunded and will soon be unable to maintain the staffing levels necessary to consistently meet the 90% in-state answer rate. DOH is requesting funding to cover the shortfall as well as the additional costs of anticipated growth over the biennium.

### *988 IT*

Within the 988 structure, each regional hub uses different technologies that are not connected. This fragmented IT landscape means that a person in crisis must retell their story with different crisis counselors, behavioral health providers, and emergency medical responders. DOH and HCA partnered to plan for a technology solution to seamlessly connect crisis counselors with resources for a less burdensome help-seeker experience. DOH is discussing funding needs and project timing with policy leaders in the executive branch, considering current fiscal challenges and competing budget demands.

### *Funding Essential IT Operations*

Rapid and substantial reductions to state and federal funding have left DOH unable to adequately support the IT infrastructure needed to meet Washington's public health priorities. To manage rising IT costs, DOH scaled back core IT services such as infrastructure, software, contracts, and personnel. DOH is requesting funding to help cover the cost of this core IT infrastructure and staffing which support the state's public health systems.