



WASHINGTON HOSPITALS OPPOSED TO INITIATIVE 1033

Tim Eyman's Initiative 1033 will be on the ballot on November 3, 2009. The initiative would have far-reaching consequences for health care, hospitals, and patients across Washington State. The Washington State Hospital Association is strongly opposed to I-1033.

Hospitals rely on state funding. Hospitals receive or benefit from a significant amount of state funding – from direct Medicaid payments, to ensuring people have insurance through the Basic Health Plan, to investments in community colleges to educate badly needed health professionals.

The people hospitals serve benefit from state funding. Ensuring people have health insurance, are healthy, and can get the care they need helps everyone. When the state cuts its funding to hospitals, hospitals must shift the cost of state-funded care to people with insurance.

Hospitals are already struggling. Hospitals were badly affected by the budget cuts made in 2009 by the Governor and the Washington State Legislature. Communities across the state are losing valuable health care staff and health services. Everyone will be affected by the cuts, with crowded emergency rooms, fewer caregivers, and longer wait times.

I-1033 would make these cuts permanent. Many legislators said the budget did not reflect their values and pledged to work to reverse the cuts when the economy recovers. I-1033 would lock in this year's budget as the baseline and prevent legislators from mitigating the cuts. The worst of times in Washington State would become the best we can expect.

I-1033 would make these cuts deeper. Not only would I-1033 make the current cuts permanent, but it would lead to even deeper cuts as the demand for and cost of health services grows. I-1033 ties growth in state spending to general population growth, but the parts of the population most in need of health care (seniors, for example) are growing faster than the general population, creating intense pressure to further cut health services.

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