



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES**

Office of the Secretary  
*Post Office Box 45010, Olympia, WA 98504-5010*

October 28, 2009

Dear DSHS Employees:

Greetings. I want to thank each of you for joining me in leadership during this time of economic recession. We are working hard to consider and act in ways so that together we can decrease poverty, improve the safety and health status of citizens, increase educational and employment success and support people and communities in reaching their potential. This is our “One Department” impact statement that is a part of our strategic framework for how we need to position ourselves for the future.

As the economy continues to have problems, so does the state budget. Our clients have experienced the impact of this poor economy directly and our state has seen revenue collections decline and our service needs increase.

Earlier, the state of Washington had to close a \$9 billion shortfall and the latest outlook shows that the state will need to address another structural deficit of nearly \$1.8 billion. We have been able to use one-time federal recovery funds to address part of the deficit, but we have also been confronted by legal challenges to some of the reductions assumed in the current budget. Given these conditions, all state agencies were asked to develop additional budget reduction options for consideration by the Governor and the Legislature.

All parts of our Department worked together in recent weeks to develop options to continue reducing our costs and to identify what resources we need to assist the increasing number of people who are coming to us for help. We all kept in mind how as “One Department” we can implement best practices to improve service efficiency, consistency and quality.

Through these efforts, we have prepared an update to our two-year budget that we submitted to the state Office of Financial Management. The update includes funds to cover increasing caseloads and also changes to our current budget to save an additional 2 percent. The reductions come from both changes to our administrative practices and some difficult changes in our service levels. This fall the Governor will review the changes that we and all other state agencies have submitted to the Office of Financial Management. The Governor will then submit her proposed changes to the biennial budget to the Legislature in December. The Legislature is scheduled to make its revisions to the budget by the spring. At that time, we will know the amount of resources that we will have available for the services we provide to families, children, elders and people with disabilities in Washington.

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Over the next several days, members of the Executive Leadership Team will be providing you, our stakeholders, partners and clients additional detail about the reduction proposals through e-mail, the DSHS Web site, letters and personal contact. Letters to staff will be posted on the [InsideDSHS](#) Intranet site so you can learn more about some of the specific proposals.

Additionally, the budget we submitted to the Office of Financial Management will be posted on the DSHS Web site.

As you read about the budget proposals in the coming days, weeks and months, I would ask that you continue to give us your [feedback](#) and propose ideas that break down barriers or reduce costs. It is this leadership that will allow us to not only continue to serve the greatest number of people, but transform their lives, leading to decreased poverty, increased health status and educational and employment success. As I have stated many times over the past months, we cannot take this on alone -- and if we could, we shouldn't. It has become even more important that we establish and participate in partnerships – with other state agencies, local governments, tribes and stakeholders – so that we can leverage resources and encourage communities to embrace their shared responsibility in supporting people and communities in reaching their full potential.

So I again invite you to join me in leadership, not only to weather these difficult times but to help “reboot” the Department so we are better prepared to emerge from this challenge a stronger, more efficient and more effective organization, both as a force to transform people’s lives and as a good shepherd of the taxpayers’ resources.

Sincerely,

Susan N. Dreyfus  
Secretary