

**NOTE: Media availability link for 2:00 p.m. at bottom.**



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## **Snohomish County Council Approves Integration with Snohomish Health District**

*Decision begins process that will conclude on January 1, 2023*

**Snohomish County, Wash., June 8, 2022** – Today, the Snohomish County Council unanimously approved a motion to integrate the Snohomish Health District and Snohomish County. This decision was made to strengthen public health in Snohomish County and ensure public health remains a central focus of our region.

Discussions to integrate the two entities have been taking place for a number of years, including the creation of the [Ruckelshaus](#) and [Gossett](#) reports in 2016 and 2017 respectively. Discussions with key stakeholders accelerated in December 2021 and included presentations to the Snohomish Health District staff, the Board of Health, and the Snohomish County Council in April and May of 2022. On May 31, 2022, the Snohomish Health District Board of Health voted unanimously on a resolution to support integration of the Health District and the County.

“Our priority is to strengthen public and environmental health in Snohomish County,” said Snohomish County Council Chair and Board of Health Member Megan Dunn. “As Snohomish County grows, we must adapt to ensure we will be able to meet the needs of our residents. Today’s action ensures we are prepared for the future public health needs of our county.”

“While the COVID-19 pandemic is not completely over just yet, now is the time to start transitioning to prepare for whatever may be coming next,” said Snohomish County Council Vice Chair and Board of Health Member Jared Mead. “A unified public health effort will ensure we are being as efficient as possible and using every opportunity to leverage county and public health assets for the benefit of all residents.”

“Today’s action is another step towards providing more robust public health services to our residents,” said Snohomish County Councilmember and Board of Health Chair Stephanie Wright. “We will find every opportunity available to us to strengthen public health, working to reestablish and expand clinical services, while addressing today’s threats and preparing for those that may be coming tomorrow.”

“The Snohomish Health District and Snohomish County have always worked together closely, and today’s decision will ensure we are being as efficient as possible with resources,” said Snohomish County Councilmember and Board of Health Member Nate Nehring. “We want to ensure that Snohomish County’s residents have a dynamic and effective public health department.”

“This is another step in Snohomish County’s efforts to ensure we are making decisions today that will serve our growing community in the long term,” said Snohomish County Councilmember and Board of Health Member Sam Low. “We are

committed to looking out for both our rural and urban communities. We will continue to collaborate with our cities and towns as they work to solve pressing public health issues.”

“I applaud the Snohomish County Council and the Board of Health for their efforts to strengthen public and environmental health,” said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. “I am personally committed to considering an expansion of direct services, including improving access to vaccinations, mental health care, and other vital services. We will partner with the Board of Health, County Council, and other stakeholders to continue improving public and environmental health.”

After today’s vote, the Snohomish County Executive will inform the Board of Health that Snohomish County will be withdrawing from the Health District on December 31, 2022. On January 1, 2023, the new county health department will begin to function. After today, the administrative integration will take place, making all Snohomish Health District staff employees of the new county health department on January 1, 2023 and ensuring finances, administration, and other technical details have been aligned.

As the Snohomish Health District transitions to a county department, the County Executive and Council have committed to working collaboratively and transparently. They will be engaging our community partners to ensure a successful integration with input from Snohomish Health District employees, the Board of Health, advisory committees, Tribes, cities, towns, and other public health stakeholders.

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At 2:00 p.m. today, June 8, 2022, Executive Somers, Board of Health Chair Wright, and Council Vice Chair Mead will be available for questions from the media via Zoom. You can attend by using the following link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93492522986?pwd=bINHbFVDSzIXWmVNaTZmbEZSdUNwQT09>

Meeting ID: 934 9252 2986

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