



Summary:

Multiple human and health service agencies in the state of Washington are currently seeking advanced legislative funding to implement electronic health records (EHR) to optimize patient care across the state. As each agency has grown into a more patient-centered care delivery model and adopted new technological advancements to optimize the healthcare experience for their patient populations, a singular solution has not been identified. All Washington State citizens deserve the right to medical care appropriate to their needs and without a statewide system we risk patient safety, wellbeing, and quality of life due to our limitations in medical information sharing. Our concern is that while the statewide solution is the optimal long-term solution, the needs of certain patient populations within state agencies may not be adequately served by the same solution.

Background:

Many human and health service agencies have already started their procurement journeys. The shift to a statewide system would halt those individual journeys and require the agencies to regroup collaboratively. Many state agencies deliver healthcare similarly to any private healthcare system, but there is one state-centered patient population that is still an exception: incarcerated individuals. Managed by health services in the Department of Corrections (DOC), incarcerated individuals require a higher level of tracking and as such, corrections specific EHR programs have been developed. DOC is under previous legislative guidance and funding to complete a procurement process by the end of FY23. Redirecting to a collaborative effort is not an ideal next step due to previous legislative direction.

Recommendation:

I ask for continued support of EHR procurement in DOC in tandem with the larger statewide solution process. The information received as DOC completes their procurement will help all involved agencies and should not be stopped prematurely.