



The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition

August 12, 2024

Teresa Mosqueda
King County Councilmember
516 Third Ave., Room 1200
Seattle, WA 98104
teresa.mosqueda@kingcounty.gov

Re: Support for Seattle Indian Health Board's Thunderbird Treatment Center to Address Opioid Crisis

Dear King County Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Seattle Indian Health Board to open Thunderbird Treatment Center on Vashon Island in 2025. As Chief Executive Officer of The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, I firmly believe that Thunderbird is essential for the health and wellbeing of Native peoples and is a critical program to address the escalating opioid crisis in King County.

We are all witnessing the devastating impacts of fentanyl and opioid addiction, but it is killing Native peoples at the highest rates in Washington and King County. According to the CDC, Native people in Washington die of opioid overdoses at a rate five times higher than the state average. It has destroyed lives, fractured families, and impacted the overall health of our entire community.

This is unacceptable. Our people need access to culturally attuned, inpatient treatment and recovery services as soon as possible.

Thunderbird Treatment Center will fill some of the major gaps that exist in King County to address the opioid crisis.

- **Capacity Increase:** Thunderbird will increase the number of inpatient beds in King County by 62%, from 148 to 240 beds.
- **Comprehensive Services:** Thunderbird will provide access to behavioral health, individual and group counseling, and Traditional Indian Medicine, which is essential to our community.
- **Inclusive Care:** Thunderbird will provide access to community-based treatment and recovery for non-Native people struggling with substance use disorder.
- **Proven Expertise:** Seattle Indian Health Board brings over 50 years of experience to Vashon and over 30 years of experience operating an inpatient treatment program.

- **Focused Mission:** Seattle Indian Health Board specializes in the health and wellbeing of underserved communities, who are disproportionately impacted by the opioid crisis.

Native organizations throughout the state of Washington provide unique and vital services. We collaborate closely to ensure that all necessary programs are available to meet our community's needs both now and in the future. Thunderbird Treatment Center is one such essential program, and its timely opening is imperative.

We urge you to collaborate with the Seattle Indian Health Board to ensure there are no delays in the Thunderbird Treatment Center's operation on Vashon Island in 2025. Your support is critical to turning the tide against the opioid crisis and saving lives.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to this vital issue.

Sincerely,



Deb Parker,
Chief Executive Officer

Cc:

Senator Patty Murray: hart_clements@murray.senate.gov

Senator Maria Cantwell: Maria_Cantwell@cantwell.senate.gov

Governor Jay Inslee: joby.shimomura@gov.wa.gov

King County Council Chair Dave Upthegrove: Dave.Upthegrove@kingcounty.gov

King County Council Vice-Chair Reagan Dunn: Reagan.Dunn@kingcounty.gov

King County Councilmember Rod Dembowski: Rod.Dembowski@kingcounty.gov

King County Councilmember Girmay Zahilay: Girmay.Zahilay@kingcounty.gov

King County Councilmember Sarah Perry: Sarah.Perry@kingcounty.gov

King County Councilmember Jorge L. Barón: Jorge.Baron@kingcounty.gov

King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci: Claudia.Balducci@kingcounty.gov

King County Councilmember Peter Von Reichbauer: Pete.Vonreichbauer@kingcounty.gov

King County Executive Dow Constantine: dow.constantine@kingcounty.gov

King County Deputy Executive Shannon Braddock: shannon.braddock@kingcounty.gov

King County Chief of Staff Karan Gill: karan.gill@kingcounty.gov

King County Budget Director Dwight Dively: dwight.dively@kingcounty.gov

King County Director of Customer Service Natasha Jones: natasha.jones@kingcounty.gov

King County Chief People Officer Whitney Abrams: whitney.abrams@kingcounty.gov

King County Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer Anita Whitfield: anita.whitfield@kingcounty.gov

King County Chief Performance Officer Gary Kurihara: gary.kurihara@kingcounty.gov

King County Director of Office of Labor Relations Megan Pedersen:

megan.pedersen@kingcounty.gov

Washington State Senator Claudia Kauffman: claudia.kauffman@leg.wa.gov

Washington State Senator Emily Randall: emily.randall@leg.wa.gov

Washington State Representative Chris Stearns: chris.stearns@leg.wa.gov

Washington State Representative Nicole Macri: nicole.macri@leg.wa.gov

Aren Sparck, Tribal Affairs Administrator, Washington State Health Health Care Authority:

aren.sparck@hca.wa.gov