

ACTION ITEM #8

WSU Pullman, Health Fee Increase
(Joan King)

May 5, 2017

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

SUBJECT: WSU Pullman, Health Fee Increase

PROPOSED: That the Washington State University Board of Regents approve a \$20 per semester increase to the Academic Year Health Fee beginning Fall 2017 (\$204/semester), and \$6 per Summer Session (\$70/summer).

SUBMITTED BY: Joan King, Associate Vice President & Chief University Budget Officer

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Health and Wellness Services (H&WS) proposes a Pullman student health fee increase of \$20 per semester, beginning Fall 2017.

Currently WSU Pullman students are charged \$184 per semester/\$368 per year for student health fees; the proposed increase would total \$204 per semester/\$408 per year, generating approximately \$733,000 annually for Student Health and Wellness.

We also propose that the health fee cover one visit at no cost to the student per semester, and that H&WS bill insurance for subsequent visits, with co-pays billed to students.

The increased fees will be used to fund operations and facility improvements, to comply with the President's charge to balance the department's budget and replenish the operating budget, and to serve the medical and mental health needs of WSU Pullman students.

Student health fees provide the following services to all fee-paying students:

- Services at no additional costs:
- Nutritional Counseling
- Smoking Cessation Counseling and free products to support cessation
- Nurse consultation services 24-hours/day
- Suicide Prevention Services

- Violence Prevention/Sexual Assault Response Services
- Counseling (individual and group counseling)
- Psychiatric Behavioral Health Services

Services that may have an additional cost associated with visit/service:

- Primary Care
- Women’s Health
- Internal Medicine
- Sports Medicine
- Pharmacy Services
- Travel Clinic
- Laboratory Services
- Radiology Services

In fiscal year 2016, H&WS had approximately 37,000 patient visits and filled more than 38,000 prescriptions for students. Our current staffing levels can’t meet the patient demand for medical and psychiatric services. Moreover, depression, anxiety, and stress are among the top 5 diagnoses seen in students presenting at primary care, resulting in many referrals to our counseling and behavioral health departments.

The few medical and mental health practices in the Pullman community simply cannot meet the growing clinical demands of WSU students. They certainly cannot provide the same level of services at a comparable cost. WSU Pullman students expect to receive same day and/or next day medical care which they are receiving at Health & Wellness. Many health care providers in the community are not taking new patients, particularly not Medicaid patients – as a large number of students are.

Under this proposal, students would be eligible for one free visit each semester. Any future visits to H&WS during that semester would be billed to the student’s medical insurance and co-pays would then apply.

The proposed student health fee increase has been reviewed by key student groups: The Student Health Advisory Council, ASWSU Pullman, and GPSA> The overwhelming feedback has been that

while students remain concerned about fee increases, they value the services provided by H&WS, both medical and psychological, as well as the emphasis on prevention. For this reason, all three groups were willing to endorse the \$20 increase and change in billing.