

**Date:** May 31, 2017

**To:** Marc Boldt, Chair Clark Board of County Councilors

**From:** Task Force on 1/10 of 1 cent Mental Health (MH) Sales Tax

**Subject:** Funding Criteria for Clark Board of County Councilors (BOCC) Policy Consideration

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**Background:** The Legislature passed E2SSB-5763 into law in 2005 to authorize counties to impose a 1/10th of one percent sales and use tax to fund new mental health and chemical dependency services and therapeutic court services. The law also indicated that funds collected under this specific sales and use tax could not supplant existing funds. Clark County Commissioners passed this tax in 2007 and created a community task force to help the County determine which programs to fund in 2008, and funds may only be spent after appropriation by the County Council. Currently, the following departments/programs receive this funding on an annual or one time basis – Community Services, Public Health, District Court, Superior Court, Sheriff, Clerk, Juvenile Justice, Prosecuting Attorney and Indigent Defense. The Budget Office works with departments on allocations and manages the fund balance. Because the sales tax is responsive to consumer spending the funding source is volatile.

**Problem statement:** On occasion, proposals come from community stakeholders and County departments requesting support for their programs from this fund. The former County Manager, with your support, established a task force to recommend some guiding principles and criteria to the BOCC for how to use it because the County doesn't have a policy.

**Task Force Members and Scope of Work:** The task force consisted of Chair Marc Boldt, Honorable James Rulli-Superior Court Judge, Vanessa Gaston- Community Services, DeDe Sieler-Community Services, Dr. Alan Melnick-Public Health, Ela Selga-District Court and Christine Simonsmeier-Juvenile Justice. The task force met three times and reviewed what programs are being funded by Medicaid health plans, federal grants and other outside resources to better understand what exists in the current behavioral system and where are the gaps in services. The work also explored anticipated changes that will impact behavioral health services in the future. The task force drafted some guiding principles and criteria, outlined below, for the BOCC to review and approve to use as a tool to help them set priorities to use these funds more strategically. The recommendation is for this task force to vet all new proposals submitted during the biennial budget process and make recommendations to the BOCC for approval.

**Suggested Criteria for Sales Tax Funding Requests:**

Criteria currently outlined in the RCW 82.14.460:

1. Must serve County resident where sales tax collected
2. Must be a connection to behavioral health (mental health and chemical dependency)
  - a. Eligible program areas are prevention, intervention, treatment, aftercare, outreach, support services such as housing, transportation and case management
3. Support new or expanded programs

4. Service operation delivery for therapeutic courts
5. Flexible funding

Recommend the following additional factors be considered when determining approval of funding requests:

1. Payer of last resort no other funding available
2. No supplanting of expenses from County General Fund
3. Data available to support need
4. Best Practice/Research based preferred
5. No duplication of services
6. Performance outcomes identified
7. Serve low income at-risk populations
8. Should align with the County's values identified in the Strategic Plan
9. Ability to leverage other funding

cc. Robert Stevens, Deputy County Manager  
Task Force Members