

**RESOLUTION NO. 2006-09**

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING HEALTH CARE**

**WHEREAS**, there is no reason for anyone in this country to go without the basic health care coverage that sustains life, and

**WHEREAS**, the Bellingham City Council recognizes that it is increasingly difficult for many Bellingham residents to obtain quality health care, and

**WHEREAS**, an estimated 13% of Whatcom County adults do not have health insurance, and

**WHEREAS**, the number of uninsured children in Washington State has reached the highest level in more than a decade and 7% of children in Whatcom County are uninsured, and

**WHEREAS**, an estimated 50% of Washington State residents do not have dental insurance or rely on Medicaid for coverage, and

**WHEREAS**, Bellingham's community health clinics provide treatment for individuals regardless of their ability to pay and approximately 20% of the patients at Interfaith Clinic are uninsured, and

**WHEREAS**, approximately 85% of Interfaith Clinic services for uninsured individuals is uncompensated, and

**WHEREAS**, as the costs of providing health and dental care continue to increase and St. Joseph Hospital provided \$9.3 million last year in charity care for those unable to pay, and

**WHEREAS**, the lack of a rational system for finding and providing universal access to quality health care has led to a rapid increase in health-care costs in the United States, which now has the world's highest per-capita health care costs, and

**WHEREAS**, despite these high costs, the United States lags behind many other developed nations in terms of many indicators of its citizens' health, including life-expectancy and infant mortality, and

**WHEREAS**, rising health care costs have affected employers' ability to provide health care benefits for their workers and have sharply increased the costs of doing business, and

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**WHEREAS**, only a rational system for financing and delivering quality health care will help ensure that all Americans have access to these necessary services a cost that is reasonable to them and to their employers, including the City of Bellingham, and

**WHEREAS**, at least eighteen states have introduced legislation regarding universal health care including California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland New York and Vermont, and

**WHEREAS**, there is a Citizen's/Congressional Hearing on Health Care on March 25, 2006 in Bellingham, and

**WHEREAS**, national legislation in the form of HR 676 and HR 1200 has been introduced into Congress, and

**WHEREAS**, concerted action is necessary to encourage the United States Congress and other decision makers to design and fund a rational health care system.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM AS FOLLOWS:**

Every person in the United State should have the right to health care of equal high quality. The U.S. Congress should immediately enact legislation to implement this right.

The City should also take the necessary steps to help realize this right for Bellingham residents and others, including but not limited to the following:

Ask Washington State representatives and senators in the U.S. Congress to adopt legislation that provides universal access to quality health care.

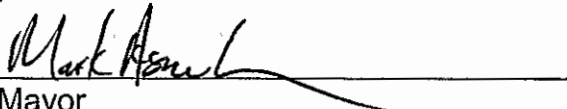
Ask the Washington State legislators to support our efforts and work toward this goal.

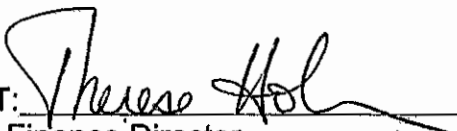
Support education of the public about this issue and support advocacy on this issue.

**PASSED** by the Council this 13th day of March, 2006.

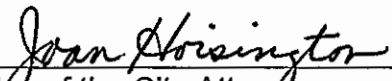
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Council President

**APPROVED** by me this 20<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2006.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

**ATTEST:**   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Finance Director

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Office of the City Attorney