

RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – 31

A Resolution of the City Council for the City of Ellensburg supporting the Board of County Commissioners for Kittitas County adopting an ordinance implementing a sales and use tax for increasing access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment and support services as authorized by RCW 82.14.460.

WHEREAS, Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 82.14.460 allows for the imposition of a sales and use tax ("Mental Health Treatment Tax") to provide for new or expanded mental health and substance use disorder support services and treatment programs; and

WHEREAS, these programs and services may support screening and intervention for mental health and substance use in public schools, expanding substance use disorder and mental health crisis services in the Kittitas Valley Healthcare Emergency Department, connecting people leaving the Emergency Department or Kittitas County Corrections Center to treatment services, expanding the delivery of onsite mental health and substance use treatment at the Corrections Center, and promoting recovery for persons with disabling mental illness and substance use disorders; and

WHEREAS, Kittitas County would be able to use the Mental Health Tax to: promote adequate, stable funding for mental health and substance use disorder services in the county; to ensure timely, affordable access to mental health and substance use disorder services focusing on wellness, prevention, early intervention and treatment; to provide crisis management and recovery and re-entry programming; and to improve continuity of care and services and ensure system improvements; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant shortage of mental healthcare providers in Kittitas County compared to Washington state as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Kittitas Valley Fire and Rescue experienced a 90% increase in mental health-related calls from 2017 to 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Ellensburg Police Department experienced a 147% increase in mental health calls from 2015 to 2020, along with a 167% increase in suicide calls for the current year through August; and

WHEREAS, the Kittitas Valley Healthcare Emergency Department received an average of 65 patients per month seen for mental health or substance use disorder issues as of April 2021; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2018 Healthy Youth survey, 24% of 10th graders in Kittitas County reported having an existing suicide plan, and 14% of 10th graders reported having attempted suicide at least once; and

WHEREAS, the issues created by persons suffering from mental health and/or substance use disorder issues negatively impacts their lives, their families and friends, local law enforcement and fire/emergency services, mental healthcare services, hospital services, our communities, and all citizens of Kittitas County; and

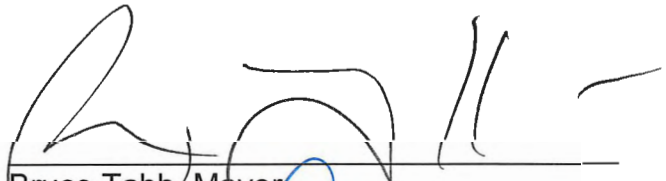
WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners for Kittitas County ("BOCC") held a hearing on April 14, 2021, to consider an ordinance implementing the Mental Health Treatment Tax, during which several members of the mental health, healthcare, law enforcement, and emergency services professions, along with members of the public, testified in overwhelming support of the tax;

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council for the City of Ellensburg do resolve as follows:

Section 1. The "Whereas" provisions set forth above are hereby incorporated in this Resolution as findings in support of the actions authorized in this Resolution.

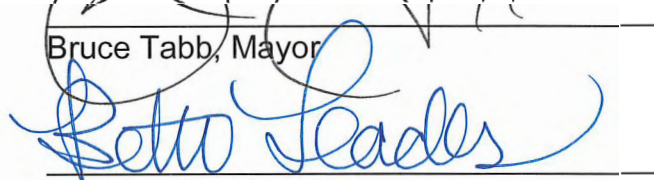
Section 2. The City Council finds that there are substantial and significant needs for the treatment and support services that would be funded by the Mental Health Treatment Tax, and encourages and supports adoption of the tax by the Board of County Commissioners for Kittitas County.

ADOPTED by the City Council of Ellensburg this 18th day of October, 2021.



Bruce Tabb, Mayor

ATTEST:



Beth Leader, City Clerk