



**TO:** Whatcom County Council

**THROUGH:** Satpal S. Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive

**FROM:** Kayla Schott-Bresler, Deputy Executive

**DATE:** August 28, 2025

**RE:** Whatcom County Health and Community Services Director Appointment

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**REQUESTING COUNCIL CONFIRMATION OF CHAMP THOMASKUTTY**

The Executive is pleased to present Mr. Champ Thomaskutty for Council Confirmation to serve as the next Director of Whatcom County Health and Community Services.

Mr. Thomaskutty has extensive experience in public health leadership, operations, planning and budget management. Since 2017, Thomaskutty has served as Deputy Health Officer for the Calvert County Health Department in Frederick, Maryland, where he has overseen a department of 275 staff with an operating budget of \$25 million and serves as both Chief Operations Officer and Agency Administrator.

Mr. Thomaskutty is trained as an epidemiologist and served as the Director of Chronic Disease Epidemiology for the Indiana State Department of Health prior to his work in local health jurisdictions. In recent years, he has increasingly focused on the intersection of data, justice systems and behavioral health to inform crisis care and jail treatment protocols.

Mr. Thomaskutty earned his Master of Public Health degree from Indiana University School of Medicine Department of Public Health and his Bachelor's degree from Birmingham-Southern College. While at IU, he was awarded the statewide Stephen Jay Leadership Public Health Award, presented to an MPH student who exhibits exemplary public health leadership, scholarship, and practice.

The appointment will be effective October 27, 2025.

**SELECTION PROCESS**

Whatcom County began a nation-wide search for a Health & Community Services director in May 2025. Human Resources retained Kara Turner, of Turner HR Services, to help with this process.

The recruitment process began with a review and improvement of the job description by representatives from the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) and WCHCS staff. In June, Senior Policy & Projects Manager Jill Boudreau offered open office hours to interview WCHCS staff on what they were looking for in their next Director, compiling feedback for the Executive.

The Executive's Office also solicited interview questions from panelists, staff and key stakeholders (Northwest Medical Society, PHAB) in preparation for several rounds of candidate engagement.

Following the position posting, including advertisement on national recruitment boards and social media, the County received over 75 applications for the position. Ms. Turner led the Executive's Office and Human Resources through a review of written materials and initial candidate outreach calls.

#### **Screening Virtual Interviews – Week of July 14<sup>th</sup>**

- *Participants:* Ms. Turner; Kayla Schott-Bresler & Aly Pennucci (Exec); Bea Acland (HR); Councilmembers Scanlon & Elenbaas (Health Board); Director Kosa (PW); and Shamika Brooks (WCHCS).
- Eight candidates interviewed.

#### **Second Round Virtual Interviews – Week of July 28<sup>th</sup>**

- *Leadership Panel:* Ms. Turner, Satpal Sidhu, Kayla Schott-Bresler, Aly Pennucci, Jill Boudreau, (Exec); Councilmembers Scanlon & Elenbaas (Health Board)
- *Public Health Panel:* Ms. Turner, Kayla Schott-Bresler (Exec), Dr. Christine Espina & Joni Hensley (PHAB); Ann Beck, Shamika Brooks & Dr. Meg Lelonek (WCHCS)
- Five candidates interviewed.

#### **On-Site Finalist Process – Week of August 11<sup>th</sup>**

Three finalists visited Whatcom County for a two-day on site process including the following activities. Ms. Turner solicited feedback on candidates from all participants using a variety of tools:

- Meeting with HR
- Tour with Administrative Services & Interim Director Ramont
- Meal with Executive and Deputy Executives
- Staff & Stakeholder Reception
- PHAB Special Meeting on the Community Health Assessment
- *Leadership Panel Interview:* Executive/Deputy Executives; Councilmembers Scanlon and Elenbaas; Mayor Kim Lund; Director Keeley (HR)
- *Public Health Management Team Interview:* WCHCS Managers; Ms. Turner

#### **Decision Making Process**

Ms. Turner conducted reference checks on the finalists and compiled feedback from all recruitment activities for review by the Executive's Office and Human Resources.

#### **CONTACT**

Please contact Kayla Schott-Bresler with any questions.