

RESOLUTION NO. _____

REDUCING INCARCERATION OF YOUNG ADULTS
(Council acting as the Health Board)

WHEREAS, The Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force (Task Force), acting as the county Law and Justice Council, has identified a priority focus of young adult incarceration prevention and reduction; and

WHEREAS, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has awarded a grant for technical assistance to Whatcom County to participate in a national Policy Academy focused on this effort; and

WHEREAS, a Policy Academy Team consisting of a Whatcom County Councilmember, a Health Department Manager, two Bellingham City Councilmembers, a Washington State Senator and two State Representatives have formed a Policy Academy Team funded in large part by the MacArthur Foundation and working with the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, and the National Conference of State Legislatures in a concerted effort to identify and implement local strategies to prevent and reduce incarceration of young adults aged 18 – 24; and

WHEREAS, research emphasizes the importance of nurturing positive neuro-development in very young children to develop protective factors and resilience that reduce risk of future criminal justice involvement; and

WHEREAS, research has demonstrated that exposure to adverse experiences at a young age can increase risk for future criminal justice involvement; and

WHEREAS, behavioral health challenges left untreated or undertreated can compromise resilience; and

WHEREAS, the model of population health developed by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute has determined that 50% of what makes and keeps a person healthy results from access to healthy environments, economic opportunities, housing security, and education; and

WHEREAS, the geography of where an individual lives is indicative of the social determinants of health they experience and thereby influences their overall health and future resilience and protective factors, which include living in a safe and higher quality environment, caring and positive community norms, and economic opportunities; and

WHEREAS, research shows that exposure to domestic violence and incarceration of an adult in the family home are significant risk factors for children that correlate to increased risks in adulthood, leading some into intergenerational engagement with the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, young adults incarcerated for more than an initial 72-hour period are more likely to return to the criminal justice system than those who experience fewer hours of initial incarceration; and

WHEREAS, public safety and public health are mutually inclusive and exist only when behavioral health, family health and stability, and social determinants of health are positively supported; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Council resolved to include Health In All Policies, which includes strategies along a continuum of Prevention, Intervention, Treatment and Support; and

