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Subject: Sub Area Plan

Planning & Development Services

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Mr. David Stalheim,

I am a family planning nurse employed by Mt. Baker Planned Parenthood and contracted to the Washington State Community Service Office to offer family planning services to individuals in isolated communities. My position was created in 2007 in response to data that was collected that showed that a disproportionately high rate of unplanned pregnancies were occurring in the eastern urban areas of Whatcom County. These same areas are also noted for having a high rate of children who are placed into foster care, as well as a high rate of drug abuse, poverty, and need for public assistance. With the current economic situation and gas prices increasing steadily, it is likely that individuals who have an acute need for public assistance will have significant boundaries to obtaining services that they must travel to receive.

In an effort to support individuals in the foothills area, I am currently offering services such as birth control education and delivery, free condoms, free pregnancy tests, and support in obtaining reliable birth control methods. These services are free and available once a week at the Mt. Baker Foothills Visitor Center. This is a temporary location and is not ideal considering that a majority of the individuals who need these services live in Kendall and surrounding neighborhoods. A center where a variety of social services are being offered tends to be the most successful model for reaching vulnerable populations who are often seeking assistance with multiple needs. The East County Regional Resource Center, which is supported by the majority of the community as outlined in the Sub-Area Plan, would be such a facility. Once it is open, I plan to move my services there, where I hope to be able to work with other social programs to serve more individuals in the Foothills community.

Family planning services are linked to increased health in communities. When individuals plan their families there is a decrease in poverty, abuse, and children in foster care. It is apparent from the data that has been collected from local health care providers, social workers, as well as the opinions of Foothills community members, that there is a significant need for increased access to social services in the Foothills communities. It is my hope that the support of the East County

Regional Resource Center as laid out in the Sub-Area Plan will be adopted and put into action, to ensure that the individuals, and families of the Mt. Baker Foothills area have access to the vital services that they need to gain optimal health and well-being for themselves and their community.

Sincerely

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