

**Statement on King County Ombudsman's Office Report on Jail Death
April 16, 2008**

Jail Health Services takes very seriously its responsibility for the health care it provides to the 30,000-plus patients in the King County Jail system every year. It is always difficult for us to have a patient die under our care, and the loss of Mr. Iszley last July is tragic.

No health care system is error-free, but we have systems in place that work to provide quality care and systematically identify and review issues and errors. As part of our ongoing systems to monitor and improve care, we review every death so we fully understand the circumstances, learn from review of our actions and take steps to improve the care that we provide.

In addition to reviews of individual cases, Jail Health Services is actively working to improve its systems of care. For example, we are implementing an electronic health records system that allows medical providers and management to systematically monitor, evaluate and improve the quality and efficiency of jail health care services. We are updating clinical guidelines for clinical care of a range of diseases such as diabetes, seizures and asthma, as well as for the identification and treatment of skin infections.

We are taking steps to improve timely access to care by addressing staffing shortages and aggressively seeking qualified candidates through a variety of means including expanded advertising and outreach. We are enhancing our training and adding a new orientation process for newly hired medical providers and nursing staff that ensures an in-depth understanding of Jail Health services, standards, protocols and procedures. Our commitment to all of these ongoing improvement activities is reflected in our accreditation by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC).

We know that complete elimination of errors is impossible in any health care organization, but all Jail Health Services staff, in cooperation with Department of Juvenile and Adult Detention, are committed to providing the patients they serve everyday with quality, timely and appropriate medical care. Together, we have a continued commitment to improve our systems so that medical errors are as infrequent as possible.