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REVISED TO CORRECT A FACTUAL ERROR

## Governor Inslee Issues Proclamation to End AIDS in Washington State by 2020

*Seattle* – Governor Jay Inslee has announced a commitment to End AIDS in Washington. The governor issued a proclamation today that appoints an HIV Planning Steering Group (HPSG) to develop a statewide plan for reducing the rate of new HIV diagnoses by 50 percent by 2020.

“It was 1981 when the first Washingtonian was diagnosed with AIDS,” said Gov. Inslee. “While the number of new cases of HIV has declined, almost 14,000 people in Washington live with HIV today and close to 500 new cases were diagnosed last year. We must do more. With medical professionals, public health experts and community advocates working together we can drive down infection rates and even hope to end AIDS in Washington State.”

Washington’s governor is the second in the United States to make this declaration. When this goal is reached in Washington, the transmission rate will be the lowest in the United States for states with 5 million or more residents.

According to the state Department of Health, more than 19,000 people in Washington have been diagnosed with HIV; more than 6,000 have died. The number of new cases has dropped from 540 in 2008 to 470 in 2013. From 2009 – 2013, 63 percent of new cases in males have occurred in white men; 17 percent are Hispanic; 11 percent are black. The governor has asked that the plan address the disparities in race and in those individuals who are least likely to get diagnosed and maintained in care, including those who are mentally ill, have chemical dependency, or unstable housing.

“The Governor’s Proclamation is one of courage, commitment, and compassion,” states Randall Russell, Lifelong’s Chief Executive Officer. “From the newly diagnosed person who is struggling to come to terms with their illness to the person who has been living with HIV for 20 years, to know that the Governor of your State supports you, that is huge.”

The state plan will incorporate existing support to people with HIV/AIDS. Government agencies and community organizations will continue to deliver services such as HIV testing, prevention education and outreach, and medical case management as well as essential support services including substance abuse treatment, housing, and nutrition. The Washington State Department of Health helps people with medication that reduces the risk of infection in people who do not have HIV but are at a high risk of getting the disease.

A copy of the Governor’s proclamation is available at [EndAIDSWashington.org](http://EndAIDSWashington.org).



#### About Lifelong

Lifelong is the leading community health organization serving people with chronic illnesses, including HIV/AIDS, in Western Washington. We believe all people have a right to a roof over their head, healthy food to eat, and access to affordable healthcare. Lifelong delivers food, housing, and health services; collaborates with community organizations on the prevention and care of chronic disease; and advocates for effective HIV/AIDS policy. Simply put —we make health work. Learn more at [lifelong.org](http://lifelong.org).

#### About the Washington State Department of Health

The Department of Health works with others to protect and improve the health of all people in Washington State. Learn more at [doh.wa.gov](http://doh.wa.gov).

#### About the HIV Planning Steering Group

The HIV Planning Steering Group (HPSG) is a 21-member, formal, standing, advisory committee. Members work with the Department of Health to develop a statewide HIV plan. Its vision is to end the HIV epidemic in Washington State by preventing new HIV infections and by keeping people with HIV healthy. HPSG is comprised of leaders in the community who serve in the following agencies: The Everett Clinic, Benton Franklin Health District, Department of Corrections, Cascade AIDS Project, Community Health Care Tacoma, Evergreen Wellness Advocates, Spokane AIDS Network, King County Public Health, Lifelong, Pierce County AIDS Foundation, Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, University of Washington, Washington State Department of Health, people living with HIV/AIDS, and those advocating for them.