

Date: May 30, 2001

To: Public Hospital District Administrators and Interested Staff

From: Taya Briley, Director, Legal Services

Re: Redistricting Commissioner Districts

Background

A couple of months ago, a message was sent to the AWPHD Listserv alerting hospital districts with commissioner districts that they are required by law to carry out a redistricting process based on the decennial census data. [See RCW 29.70.100] Since then, we have worked to learn about the process and how AWPHD might be able to assist with redistricting. Discussions with data analysts indicate that due to the uniqueness of each redistricting situation, AWPHD will not be able to offer a tool to help districts through the process. We do, however, want to offer the following redistricting information to assist hospital districts with the process.

The redistricting process basically involves taking the legal description of the boundaries of the hospital district commissioner districts and the appropriate year 2000 census maps and determining how the district population has shifted. Boundaries are then redrawn to equalize the number of residents in each commissioner district.

RCW 29.70.100 sets out some requirements for the redistricting process. Subsection three states that no later than eight months after receipt of federal decennial census data, the governing body of the district must prepare a plan for redistricting.

The Redistricting Commission

The entity responsible for delivering the data to hospital districts under RCW 29.70.100 is the Washington Redistricting Commission. They have made the data available to the districts through county Records and Elections Departments. The data was officially made available as of the first week of May, and the eight-month time frame is calculated from that time. If you do not yet have the data, contact the Redistricting Commission or your County Records and Elections Departments and it will be provided to you.

The Washington Redistricting Commission can be reached at (360) 586-9000 or contact@redistricting.wa.gov. Their web site is <http://www.redistricting.wa.gov/>. Scroll to the bottom and click on Local Government Redistricting. The redistricting data is available on the web and in CD format.

Other Resources

Links to the census data required for the redistricting process can also be found at the State Office of Financial Management web site at www.ofm.wa.gov/census2000/index.htm. A page full of useful links about the census and redistricting can be found at the Municipal Research & Services Center <http://mrsc-web.mrsc.org/planning/census.htm>.

When you start the redistricting process, contact your County Records & Elections Department and County Assessor to determine the level of assistance they can provide. It appears that the level of assistance available varies greatly from county to county. At a minimum, you should be able to obtain a legal description of your hospital district's boundaries from the County Assessor.

Though it is an expensive proposition, it has also been suggested that some of the consulting firms such as Andersen Consulting and KPMG could complete a redistricting project for a hospital district.

Abolishing Commissioner Districts

Finally, it should be noted that hospital district boards of commissioners can, by resolution, choose to abolish existing commissioner districts. [RCW 70.44.042] This would relieve a hospital district of the redistricting requirement. All district residents would then vote on each commissioner position.

If you have any questions regarding the content of this memorandum or need help locating redistricting resources, please contact Taya Briley at (206) 216-2554 or tayab@awphd.org