



## Health Care Hard Hit in Governor's Budget Road Map

Proposed cuts will limit services and could mean closure for some hospitals

### Help Preserve United General Hospital

State and federal governments are proposing major budget cuts that will dramatically impact United General Hospital. If the **proposed reductions to the Critical Access Hospital program are implemented, United will be forced to cut services.** These cuts will undermine our health care system and will be felt for years to come.

Please contact your legislators and tell them how you feel. Attached is a sample letter that you can modify or use as is, or you can compose one of your own. For insight into the details of the current issues, please see the websites of the Washington State Hospital Association at [www.wsha.org](http://www.wsha.org) or the American Hospital Association at [www.aha.org](http://www.aha.org). You will also find a link to this material on our website: [www.unitedgeneral.org](http://www.unitedgeneral.org).

*State and federal legislators' addresses:*

#### **State Legislators:**

Senator Val Stevens  
PO Box 40439  
Olympia, WA 98504-0439  
[val.stevens@leg.wa.gov](mailto:val.stevens@leg.wa.gov)

Representative Kirk Pearson  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600  
[kirk.pearson@leg.wa.gov](mailto:kirk.pearson@leg.wa.gov)

Representative Dan Kristiansen  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600  
[dan.kristiansen@leg.wa.gov](mailto:dan.kristiansen@leg.wa.gov)

#### **Federal Legislators:**

Senator Maria Cantwell  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
FAX: (202) 228-0514

Senator Patty Murray  
448 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
FAX: (202) 224-0238

Representative Rick Larsen  
108 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
FAX: (202) 225-4420

## LETTER TEMPLATE

Dear (Senator / Representative \_\_\_\_\_),

The Critical Access Hospital program is the lifeline for 38 rural hospitals and their patients in the State of Washington. These small, rural hospitals have high volumes of Medicare, Medicaid and uninsured patients. Critical Access Hospital designation provides them cost-based reimbursement for their Medicare and Medicaid patients. These hospitals are the anchor of health care in their rural communities and an important component in Washington's health care system. In my community, United General Hospital in Sedro-Woolley is designated as a Critical Access Hospital.

Both the federal and state governments are considering making significant cuts to the Critical Access Hospital program. These cuts represent a very serious threat to United General Hospital's viability. The Federal Administration's recent list of proposed cuts includes a reduction in Medicare and Medicaid payments to United General Hospital of more than **\$2,120,000 per year**. Washington State is considering other actions that would further reduce payments by more than **\$2,800,000**.

United General Hospital, along with the other critical access hospitals, constitutes a tiny slice of the federal and state Medicare and Medicaid budgets, but the impact of these proposed cuts is enormous. A cut of this magnitude will force many hospitals, including United General Hospital, to **reduce or eliminate essential patient services – or possibly even close their facilities**. Enacting the cuts would also mean the loss of many health care jobs in rural communities – where hospitals are often one of the largest employers.

Ironically, United General is the least expensive source for hospital care in our region. Eliminating any of their services as a result of the proposed cuts will result in an increase in costs to both the federal and state governments. Such a decision will have the opposite effect to reducing the federal budget by increasing cost of services for patients having to seek care, often delayed, elsewhere.

Please help preserve rural hospital care and allow facilities like United General Hospital to continue to care for our communities. **Do not implement the proposed cuts to the Critical Access Hospital program.**

Respectfully,

\_\_\_\_\_

(You must include your name and address)