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**Governor Inslee Takes Major Step to Support Health of State Employees**  
*Washington to Become First State to Ensure Access to Healthy Food in State Facilities*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Olympia, WA - Governor Inslee recently took an important step to support the health of Washingtonians, making Washington the first state to adopt a comprehensive approach to increasing access to fresh, healthy food on state property and facilities. Obesity in Washington state is expected to reach 55% by 2030, and is a major contributor to high health care costs.

The Governor signed Executive Order 13-06 "*Improving the Health and Productivity of State Employees and Access to Healthy Foods in State Facilities.*" Similar to approaches taken by businesses to protect their vital workforces, the state is establishing a Health and Wellness Steering Committee to set up a worksite wellness program. State agencies also will increase the availability of healthy, fresh and locally grown food and beverage choices for employees and state program participants.

The state is a major purchaser of food, buying for its tens of thousands of employees and individuals in its care. However, the nutritional quality of that food hasn't been a major consideration in many of those purchases.

Representative Laurie Jinkins (D-WA 27<sup>th</sup> District) has been a long-standing champion for health, "The state government has been an educator, investing in promoting healthy eating and active living. We forget that the state also has a role as an employer and provides food through many programs and venues. I'm pleased that Governor Inslee has taken this important step to ensure that the state "walks its talk" in making healthy foods and wellness programs more available."

While worksite wellness is not an entirely new concept for state government – in fact, several states have established similar programs in the past few years – the concept of increasing access to healthy, fresh and local foods in the workplace by Executive Order is unique.

The Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition, a statewide advocacy group comprised of 47 organizations seeking real solutions to the obesity crisis, has been working to improve food options at the state and local levels since 2010. Victor Colman, director, remarked, "If we are going to change the course of the obesity crisis, we need to start by making healthy choices easier where we live, work, learn and play. Governor Inslee knows that should begin with the state's own programs and facilities. State agencies should set a good example, and not undermine their other obesity prevention efforts."

By July 1, 2014 all Washington state agencies will adopt food and beverage guidelines based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The guidelines will apply to "vending machines, cafeterias, on-site retail establishments, and at meetings or events." They also support state agriculture and the local foods movement by purchasing and promoting Washington-grown products wherever practical.

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