



STATE OF WASHINGTON

— OFFICE OF GOVERNOR BOB FERGUSON —

## EXECUTIVE ORDER 26-01

### ADDRESSING MENOPAUSE-RELATED WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS UNDER THE WASHINGTON LAW AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

**WHEREAS**, approximately 1.3 million individuals in the United States transition into menopause each year, and 34% of people with menopause systems are not diagnosed; and

**WHEREAS**, new research suggests that many women begin experiencing perimenopause in their thirties; and

**WHEREAS**, research indicates that Black, Asian, and Latina women tend to enter menopause earlier than white women, which suggests that they may likewise enter perimenopause earlier than their white counterparts; and

**WHEREAS**, studies show that women living in rural areas are more likely to reach menopause earlier than their urban counterparts, and specifically, that they may experience greater burdens associated with psychological and somatic menopause symptoms; and

**WHEREAS**, research shows that menopause is linked to premature departure from the workforce; and

**WHEREAS**, a recent study found an association between increased menopause symptom severity and negative work outcomes, resulting in an annual estimated \$1.8 billion direct loss to the U.S. economy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD), chapter 49.60 RCW, prohibits discrimination in employment and requires reasonable accommodation of “a sensory, mental, or physical impairment that is medically cognizable or diagnosable”; and

**WHEREAS**, employees experiencing menopause and/or perimenopause may experience symptoms that impact their ability to perform work duties and may require reasonable accommodation under the WLAD, and for which they may seek medical treatment; and

**WHEREAS**, all state agencies have a responsibility to follow worker civil rights protections provided for under the WLAD, and to comply with requirements to provide reasonable accommodations for their employees under the WLAD when applicable; and

**WHEREAS**, it is a priority that state employees have access to information about their rights under the WLAD; and

**WHEREAS**, employees experiencing menopause and/or perimenopause may also benefit from other workplace adjustments designed to facilitate their well-being and full participation at work; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington State Women’s Commission exists to improve the well-being of women and girls by enabling them to participate fully in employment, considering their unique needs, and promoting policies that address issues relevant to them; and

**WHEREAS**, the Women’s Commission is working to address the silence surrounding menopause and perimenopause, which may affect employees’ career progression and economic stability in their prime working years; and

**WHEREAS**, individuals experiencing menopause and/or perimenopause may benefit from health care providers in Washington having increased access to information and tools to understand and manage menopause and perimenopause, including treatments such as hormone therapy; and

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Bob Ferguson, Governor of the state of Washington, by the power vested in me by the Constitution and the statutes of the state of Washington, do hereby order and direct the Women’s Commission to work with all executive and small cabinet agencies to ensure that all executive and small cabinet agencies have access to model training and resource materials, and have appropriate workplace reasonable accommodation policies that apply to, and account for the needs of, employees experiencing menopause and/or perimenopause. I also order and direct the Women’s Commission to work with other agencies and partners as directed below, to support the well-being and full participation in employment of employees in Washington experiencing menopause and perimenopause.

Specifically, the Women’s Commission and Office of Financial Management shall:

1. Work with the Office of Financial Management to review and evaluate executive and small cabinet agencies’ existing policies and practices applicable to menopause- and perimenopause-related conditions and reasonable accommodations;
2. Work with the Office of Financial Management to identify best practices for executive and small cabinet agencies to follow in adopting and implementing policies and practices regarding the reasonable accommodation needs of employees experiencing menopause and perimenopause;
3. Work directly with the Office of Financial Management and each executive and small cabinet agency in adopting or updating, as appropriate, policies and practices applicable to menopause- and perimenopause-related reasonable accommodations in accordance with the WLAD that are tailored to the needs of each agency’s workforce;

4. Work with the Department of Health, the Bree Collaborative, and the Health Care Authority, and seek legal advice from the Attorney General's Office, to develop training materials addressing menopause- and perimenopause-related conditions and reasonable accommodations in the workplace, and to ensure that each executive and small cabinet agency's employees, Human Resources staff, and management have access to appropriate trainings on their rights and responsibilities under the WLAD and under agency policies and practices;
5. Work with the Department of Health, the Medical Commission, the Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery, the Board of Nursing, the Board of Naturopathy, the Examining Board of Psychology, and any other relevant health profession boards and commissions, to review possibilities for providers to earn professional licensing credits for menopause and perimenopause education, and provide any relevant recommendations to the Governor's office within twelve months after the issuance of this Executive Order; and
6. Work with the Department of Health, the Bree Collaborative, and the Health Care Authority, and seek legal advice from the Attorney General's Office, to draft guidance and resources for state agencies and other public and private employers interested in adopting policies and practices applicable to menopause- and perimenopause-related conditions and reasonable accommodations in the workplace.

All executive and small cabinet agencies shall provide information to, and shall work collaboratively with, the Women's Commission to implement this Executive Order. Each executive and small cabinet agency shall provide copies of the agency's existing reasonable accommodation policies, and any other requested information, to the Women's Commission within twelve months after the issuance of this Executive Order.

On or before April 30, 2027, the Women's Commission shall provide a written report of its progress in implementing this Executive Order to the Governor's office.

This Executive Order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law. Provisions of this Order are not intended to alter any existing collective bargaining agreements. This Order is not intended to confer and does not confer any legal right or entitlement and shall not be used as a basis for legal challenges to any rule or any other action or inaction of the governmental entities and employees subject to it.

This Order shall take effect immediately.

Signed and sealed with the official seal of the state of Washington on this 1st day of June, AD, Two Thousand and Twenty-Six, at Seattle, Washington.

By:

/s/

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Bob Ferguson  
Governor

BY THE GOVERNOR:

/s/

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Secretary of State