

RCW 70.44.040 Elections—Commissioners, terms, districts. (1)

The provisions of Title 29A RCW relating to elections shall govern public hospital districts, except as provided in this chapter.

A public hospital district shall be created when the ballot proposition authorizing the creation of the district is approved by a simple majority vote of the voters of the proposed district voting on the proposition and the total vote cast upon the proposition exceeds forty percent of the total number of votes cast in the proposed district at the preceding state general election.

A public hospital district initially may be created with three, five, or seven commissioner districts. At the election at which the proposition is submitted to the voters as to whether a district shall be formed, three, five, or seven commissioners shall be elected from either three, five, or seven commissioner districts, or at large positions, or both, as determined by resolution of the county commissioners of the county or counties in which the proposed public hospital district is located, all in accordance with RCW 70.44.054. The election of the initial commissioners shall be null and void if the district is not authorized to be created.

No primary shall be held. A special filing period shall be opened as provided in RCW 29A.24.171 and 29A.24.181. The person receiving the greatest number of votes for the commissioner of each commissioner district or at large position shall be elected as the commissioner of that district. The terms of office of the initial public hospital district commissioners shall be staggered, with the length of the terms assigned so that the person or persons who are elected receiving the greater number of votes being assigned a longer term or terms of office and each term of an initial commissioner running until a successor assumes office who is elected at one of the next three following district general elections the first of which occurs at least one hundred twenty days after the date of the election where voters approved the ballot proposition creating the district, as follows:

(a) If the public hospital district will have three commissioners, the successor to one initial commissioner shall be elected at such first following district general election, the successor to one initial commissioner shall be elected at the second following district general election, and the successor to one initial commissioner shall be elected at the third following district general election;

(b) If the public hospital district will have five commissioners, the successor to one initial commissioner shall be elected at such first following district general election, the successors to two initial commissioners shall be elected at the second following district general election, and the successors to two initial commissioners shall be elected at the third following district general election;

(c) If the public hospital district will have seven commissioners, the successors to two initial commissioners shall be elected at such first following district general election, the successors to two initial commissioners shall be elected at the second following district general election, and the successors to three initial commissioners shall be elected at the third following district general election.

The initial commissioners shall take office immediately when they are elected and qualified. The term of office of each successor shall

be six years. Each commissioner shall serve until a successor is elected and qualified and assumes office in accordance with *RCW 29A.20.040.

(2) Only a registered voter who resides in a commissioner district may be a candidate for, or hold office as, a commissioner of the commissioner district. Voters of the entire public hospital district may vote at a primary or general election to elect a person as a commissioner of the commissioner district.

If the proposed public hospital district initially will have three commissioner districts and the public hospital district is countywide, and if the county has three county legislative authority districts, the county legislative authority districts shall be used as public hospital district commissioner districts. In all other instances the county auditor of the county in which all or the largest portion of the proposed public hospital district is located shall draw the initial public hospital district commissioner districts and designate at large positions, if appropriate, as provided in RCW 70.44.054. Each of the commissioner positions shall be numbered consecutively and associated with the commissioner district or at large position of the same number.

The commissioners of a public hospital district that is not coterminous with the boundaries of a county that has three county legislative authority districts shall at the times required in chapter 29A.76 RCW and may from time to time redraw commissioner district boundaries in a manner consistent with chapter 29A.76 RCW.

(3) No person may hold office as a commissioner while serving as an employee of the public hospital district. [2006 c 322 s 1; 1997 c 99 s 1; 1994 c 223 s 78; 1990 c 259 s 39; 1979 ex.s. c 126 s 41; 1957 c 11 s 1; 1955 c 82 s 1; 1953 c 267 s 2; 1947 c 229 s 1; 1945 c 264 s 5; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6090-34.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 29A.20.040 was recodified as RCW 29A.60.280 pursuant to 2013 c 11 s 93.

Effective date—1997 c 99: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [April 21, 1997]." [1997 c 99 s 8.]

Purpose—1979 ex.s. c 126: See RCW 29A.60.280(1).