

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell
FBH & CHAS Health Clinic Groundbreaking
June 29, 2026

Sen. Cantwell Remarks

[VIDEO]

Sen. Cantwell: Morning everyone. I want to, before I start, take a moment to remember on this one-year anniversary the tragic loss of two firefighters from our region at the Canfield incident. We so appreciate our first responders, and our hearts and prayers go out to the families as we remember these two individuals, John Morrison and Frank Harwood.

So today, Kelli, Aaron, Luc, thank you so much for this great celebration. I'm grateful to be part of it. As [a] one-of-a-kind facility in this Spokane community, I believe this clinic represents the future of behavioral health, bringing together primary care, substance abuse treatment, and social services under one roof.

I want to thank Mayor [Lisa] Brown for her leadership in behavioral health services and strengthening Spokane's communities. Thank you very much, Mayor.

I want to thank our state legislators for being here, but especially Timm Ormsby. Timm, what a way to go out on top delivering for this community a one-of-a-kind facility and 23 years of experience [in the state legislature]. Timm, we're going to miss you, so don't be a stranger.

I also want to thank our third district reps, Marcus Riccelli, who chairs the Health Care Committee. I think you do, don't you? Not anymore. Okay, well, you're still there. And Natasha [Hill] is playing an unbelievable role in continuing to help us, so we appreciate them as well.

I'm proud to be here because it is, as I said, [a] one-of-a-kind groundbreaking, and it's going to make a lasting difference for the Spokane community.

Integrated care and the partnership that is between Frontier Behavioral Health and the CHAS Healthcare System is really rethinking how healthcare works, and it's being delivered here in Spokane.

Right now, as you heard from the other speakers, too many people are falling through the cracks. More than 4000 low-income residents in downtown Spokane do not have access to a community health center, let alone integrated behavioral health services.

But today, Spokane is providing that new model, and as CHAS has found, 40% of patients with [a] mental health diagnosis never engage in behavioral health treatment. That's why this is such a great solution.

The clinic is going to be designed to do [just] that, and instead of sending people from one provider, to another provider, to another provider, to another provider, and having to deal with issues like

substance abuse treatment, pharmacy services, lab services, [and] care navigation [separately], all of that is now under one roof.

So, [there's] lots to be proud of. When we talk about how fragmented healthcare is, and we talk about [how] only 10% of [behavioral health] referrals result in a completed appointment, when providers work side by side and when care is navigated, that number jumps to 50%.

Last year, we saw first responders treating [roughly] 1800 overdose patients and administering nearly 1000 Narcan treatments, and that's not all. The drugs continue to evolve because [more] dangerous and more unprecedented products [are] mak[ing] their way into our communities, so that means our response has to evolve as well, and so that is why today is such a big milestone.

Many of our legislators here have heard of the work of Dr. [Caleb] Banta-Green from the University of Washington in developing one-stop treatment in health engagement hubs, and this is a prime example of that [type of] engagement hub. The low barrier response decreases overdoses mortality rates by 68%, an astounding accomplishment that should be replicated throughout the United States.

That is why I fought to secure \$2 million for this Health Resource Service Administration grant to help build this 9800 square foot facility to integrate behavioral health and primary care and say we can have one-stop healthcare shopping for people here in Spokane.

So today we're here to celebrate a win for Spokane. I will continue to champion and expand healthcare quality, I will continue to be an advocate for the integrated healthcare model, and I will continue to say that Spokane is not only leading here in the state of Washington, but leading the nation in a model that other people should replicate.

Thank you, Kelli, and thank you to everybody who helped make today possible.