

# THE SKANNER™

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## LUNCHTIME!



PHOTO BY JULIE KEEFE

John James and Ghetai Scott, monitors with the Seattle Human Services Department's Summer Food Service Program pass out nutritious meals to kids, June 26 at the Jefferson Community Center at the kick off event for the free summer meal program for kids. The U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded program is open to children at over 100 sites across the city. For a complete list of sites and hours for the Summer Food Service Program, please call 206-386-1140 or visit [www.seattle.gov/summerfood](http://www.seattle.gov/summerfood).

## Health Act Upheld

### Democrats celebrate health care ruling, continue with reforms

By Rachel La Corte  
The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Democrats in Washington state celebrated Thursday's U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding President Barack Obama's health care overhaul, and key officials said the state is on track to continue implementing reforms.

In a 5-4 ruling, the court upheld virtually all of the law, including the contentious individual insurance requirement.

Washington state Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler said that the months of uncertainty over what the ruling would be had been "one of those dark clouds that hung over our heads."

Kreidler said state officials had been "proceeding at full speed" and called the ruling "vindication" of the work the state has already done.

"We feel a lot of relief," he said.

Gov. Chris Gregoire called it a historic decision "that will allow Washington to continue as a leader in providing access to quality, affordable health care to its residents."

While several reforms are currently in place in the state, several benefits and programs won't take effect until 2014, including an expansion of Medicaid for 328,000 low-income adults who don't have children, and the ban preventing insurance companies from denying people coverage if they're sick.

Online insurance exchanges are key to the federal health care law, and in March, Gregoire signed into law a bill setting rules for insurers preparing for the state's online insurance exchange set to go live on Jan. 1, 2014.

Kreidler said the state has made significant progress on readying the state for the full implementation of the law, but said there's still a lot of work to do.

"There's a heavy workload in front of us leading up to 2014," he said. Kreidler said

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## D-Day Launched for Plastic Bags

### Controversial ban kicks off with widescale reusable bag giveaways

Single-use plastic carryout bags became a thing of the past on Sunday, July 1, but Seattle shoppers can quickly make the transition to reusable bags thanks to several local stores that will be giving them away for free.

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is partnering with several Seattle retailers, including all 16 Safeway stores, to give away more than 32,000 free reusable bags to shoppers — half from Safeway, half from SPU — while supplies last. Bags will be

given to shoppers first-come, first-served beginning Sunday, the first day of the plastic bag ban.

"We're already seeing lots of shoppers using reusable bags and are pleased to see support for this effort from so many Seattle retailers," said City Councilmember Mike O'Brien, who spearheaded the plastic grocery bag ban legislation. "The switch from plastic to reusable bags means that 16 fewer shipping containers — or 8 railroad cars — of garbage

will be shipped to the landfill every year."

Other stores partnering with SPU to give free bags to customers include Hing Dong Market in the Chinatown International District, Kress IGA Downtown and the Crown Hill and Aurora Grocery Outlets. Free bags will not be available until Sunday.

Leading up to the July 1 ban, SPU mailed 10,000 notices to retailers and made nearly 500 in-person and phone contacts with Seattle stores to help them

prepare for the ban on lightweight, single-use plastic carryout bags. SPU has also prepared flyers in 15 languages, including English, with information about the bag ban. They are available along with other information about the plastic bag ban at [www.seattle.gov/plasticbagban](http://www.seattle.gov/plasticbagban).

The bag ban ordinance, which was unanimously approved by the Seattle City Council in December 2011, prohibits all Seattle retail stores from provid-

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## King County Kicks Off River Safety

### New signs, mailer part of County effort to keep river users safe this

The promise of long summer days in the Pacific Northwest might have residents thinking about heading out for a quick swim or raft trip — but it definitely has King County health and safety officials raising awareness about river safety.

Even though the air is warmer, the rivers are still cold and the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Public Health — Seattle & King County, and

King County Sheriff's Office are urging recreationalists to exercise caution around open water.

Public health and safety officials this week are kicking into high gear a campaign to heighten awareness of river dangers and what people can do to help prevent drownings. A mailer that urges life jacket use and provides other river safety information — including resources for affordable and dis-

counted lifejackets — will be sent to more than 30,000 addresses within about one mile of major King County river recreation areas.

And new signage is being installed at riverside recreation areas. The yellow signs — reading: "Warning, River is Dangerous" — are going up at more than a dozen popular river put-in locations on King County Parks

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