

Dear Community Member,

The Alliance continues to make great progress on many fronts. The draft of the first health care performance report for the five-county region will very soon be on its way to the 16 clinic systems that have volunteered to participate in our first reporting cycle. This draft round allows the physician leaders within these clinics to privately review the report and give feedback to the Alliance to inform our efforts as we move forward with finalizing the region's first public report on health care performance.

Meanwhile, more clinical improvement teams – comprised of medical leaders and other local experts – are producing valuable recommendations to improve health care quality and affordability for all the “P” participants in the health care system – providers, patients, plans, and purchasers. Read on for more detail about this and many other activities within the Puget Sound Health Alliance.

We're looking forward to a busy and productive fall!

Margaret Stanley
Executive Director

Progress At-A-Glance

Thanks to the hard work of the Board, committees, workgroups and staff, the Alliance has made much progress, including:

- ✓ **Nearly completed the draft of the first report on health care performance for the region.** The report reflects data from 15 health plans and self-insured employers and union trusts. It will show results for 16 clinic systems (representing more than 80 practice locations) that have volunteered to participate in this first report. Kudos to each of the clinic systems who are local leaders in improving health care quality and transparency:

Evergreen Healthcare
Group Health
Lakeshore Clinic
Minor & James Medical
MultiCare Health System
Northwest Physicians Network
Pacific Medical Centers
Providence Physician Group
Puget Sound Family Physicians

Puget Sound Neighborhood Health
Centers
Swedish Physicians
The Everett Clinic
The Polyclinic
UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics
Valley Medical Center
Virginia Mason

- ✓ **Finished the Pharmaceutical (Rx) Clinical Improvement Team Phase 2 Final Report**, which has been approved by the Alliance Board. This report provides recommendations for increasing affordable prescriptions for certain types of drugs that are widely used for common conditions, including high cholesterol, excessive stomach acid, and depression.

- ✓ **Launching a Consumer Engagement initiative** to promote the use of Health Risk Assessments (HRAs) to help spur improved health behaviors. Look to the Alliance website to find tools and information to help consumers access and use HRAs and to help providers and employers support consumers in making changes to help lower their health risks.
- ✓ **Nearing completion on the Clinical Improvement Team report on Prevention.** This team is developing specific recommendations in the areas of physical activity and nutrition, tobacco use, aspirin chemoprophylaxis, colorectal cancer screening, influenza immunizations, and childhood immunizations. In selecting these areas, emphasis was placed on the degree of preventable disease burden and the cost-effectiveness of various clinical preventive services. The nationally recognized Partnership for Prevention's analysis and ranking was used as a guide in the selection process. The final report is expected in October.
- ✓ **Initiated a Clinical Improvement Team on Asthma.** This group is focusing on the newly-released National Asthma Guidelines that focus on assessment and monitoring, patient education, control of environmental factors, and medications. This report is expected in December.
- ✓ **Hosted the first-ever Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Aligning Forces for Quality annual meeting,** which included representatives from 14 communities around the country along with a variety of national technical experts. This three-day meeting focused on public reporting, quality improvement and consumer engagement. At the meeting, RWJF announced a new grant opportunity for the 14 grantee communities focused on expanding leadership, improving care, performance measurement and reporting, reducing disparities in care, and improving communication with underrepresented communities. The Alliance will get more detail about this in September with funding proposals due by year-end.
- ✓ **Co-sponsored a Health Literacy Forum with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services** to explore potential interest and opportunities for a community collaboration around health literacy. Participants included representatives from a variety of health care, health plan, and county, state and federal organizations, along with local literacy organizations, libraries and other community groups such as AARP. Plans are underway for a second meeting to explore further collaboration, potentially in conjunction with Health Literacy month in October.
- ✓ **Received an unsolicited donation** of \$15,000 from the Health Care Purchasers Association in support of the Alliance mission and progress to improve health care.
- ✓ **Hired Natasha Rosenblatt as the Alliance Performance Report Project Manager.** Prior to joining our team, Natasha served as a Data Systems Consultant providing project management, systems analysis, and report development for both non-profit and for-profit health care entities, including Milliman and Community Health Plan of Washington.

Welcome to the Alliance!

The Alliance now includes 154 organizations and 50 individuals. Since our last Update, the following groups and individuals have joined the Alliance: Bennett, Bigelow & Leedom, P.S., Century Eyecare, Pediatric Associates, Physicians of Southwest Washington, Radia, Rockwood Clinic, Cindy Balogh, Chris Ditlefsen, Geoff Frank, Diane French, Richard Rosaaen, Howard Underwood and Nancee Wildermuth.

Welcome to all new Alliance participants. The entire community THANKS YOU for your support and involvement! If you want to help improve quality and affordability in local health care, get involved with the Alliance. To join, go to the [sign-up page on our website](#) or contact Sean McCliment at sean@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org

***Reminder:** Any organization or individual who joins the Alliance can access reports, minutes and other committee materials by logging into the Participant Only section of our website. Participants are also welcome to attend Alliance committee, workgroup and Board meetings.*

Upcoming Events (see also www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org/resources/Events.html)

Northwest Medical Informatics Symposium, presented by Inland Northwest Health Services – September 13-14, 2007, 7:30-4:30, The Davenport Hotel, Spokane. Learn about national health information technology policy directions and how they impact you. Hear from regional and national experts about initiatives and projects, what works and what doesn't for Electronic Medical Records, certification, improving outcomes, security issues, and making value based purchasing decisions. Speakers include: Newt Gingrich, Former Speaker of the US House of Representatives; Mark Leavitt, MD, PhD, Chairman of the Certification for Healthcare Information Technology; Mark Frisse, MD, Director of Regional Informatics Program, Vanderbilt Center for Better Health; and Linda Kloss, Chief Executive Officer, American Health Information Management Association. Cost is \$175 for the full conference or \$100 for a single day. To register online, go to www.nmis.info or call 1-888-258-9632.

Step Out to Fight Diabetes – The American Diabetes Association is sponsoring three upcoming walks in the area: Saturday, **Sept. 15**, Point Defiance Park, Tacoma; Saturday, **Sept. 29**, Seward Park, Seattle; and Saturday, **Oct. 6**, Tulalip Amphitheatre, Tulalip. To register online, go to www.diabetes.org/stepout. To learn about sponsorship opportunities for the walks, contact Nancy Rutstein at (206) 282-4616 or nrutstein@diabetes.org.

The Governor's Health Bowl – Ladies and gentlemen, set your pedometers. **September 18** marks the start of the third annual Governor's Health Bowl. The six-week competition, which runs through November 1, offers a fun opportunity for individual champions, participating organizations and schools involved in the Washington Health Foundation's Healthiest State in the Nation Campaign to build challenges around fitness and knowledge about our state's health. The year's competition will again feature a School Challenge (K-12) and a Healthiest Business

Challenge. The Alliance is among the sponsors of the Healthiest Business Challenge, which will feature materials developed by the Alliance to help employers build healthy workplaces, including tips for making effective use of health risk assessments. For more information, visit www.whf.org/HSIN/GovHealthBowl.aspx.

“Tackling High Blood Pressure” Outreach with the Seattle Seahawks – Along with Alliance member organizations WAMU, Virginia Mason, Free & Clear and Novartis, the Alliance is an in-kind sponsor of blood pressure screening booths at all Seahawks home games, in addition to booths at Costco stores and certain community events, to promote the importance of managing high blood pressure. The booths are staffed by nurses who are taking blood pressure readings and distributing the Alliance “Healthy Heart Checklist” to football fans and others who stop by. If fans complete two blood pressure screenings, they can enter a drawing for two free tickets to a future Seahawks home game. To find the booth, go to “Touchdown City” near the stadium before any Seattle Seahawks home games this year.

The Washington State Collaborative - The Washington State Collaborative and the Children’s Health Improvement Collaborative (CHIC) are merging to become the Washington State Collaborative for Children and Adults. Both are based on the nationally recognized chronic care model, developed by Improving Chronic Illness Care, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This sixth Collaborative is designed for small medical practices of 5 or fewer providers. The focus areas are asthma, diabetes or hypertension for adult patients and asthma, overweight prevention or medical home for pediatric patients. Enrollment for teams will begin this Fall – watch the Alliance website and other publications for more detail!

News of Note

Margaret Stanley Named to NBCH Board

In July, Margaret Stanley, Alliance Executive Director, was appointed to the National Business Coalition on Health (NBCH) Board of Governors. NBCH is a national, non-profit, membership organization of more than 70 employer-based health care coalitions, representing over 10,000 employers across the USA. NBCH and its members are dedicated to value-based purchasing of health care through the collective action of public and private purchasers. In developing, identifying, and disseminating best practices in value-based purchasing strategies, NBCH seeks to accelerate the nation’s progress toward safe, efficient, high quality health care. Board members are elected by board peers based on proven leadership and commitment to NBCH, as well as their efforts to advance and strengthen the tenets of value-based purchasing.

Alliance Ahead of the Curve

In a case study released last month, the Commonwealth Fund identified the Alliance as one of the top groups that are “ahead of the curve” for working toward value-based health care. The report cited as “instrumental to the Alliance’s successes to date...strong leadership, interdisciplinary teamwork, collaboration among stakeholders, and willingness to compromise.”

Other Health News [the material below, and much more, is currently on our website.]

Sending Back the Doctor's Bill

Economists, some of whom are also doctors, say the partisan fight over insurers and drug makers is a distraction from a bigger problem: the relatively high salaries paid to American doctors, and even more importantly, the way they are compensated. [Read more](#) *The New York Times*, July 29, 2007

U.S. Health IT Lags

According to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, only 1 in 10 U.S. physicians in 2005 were using systems that included prescription and diagnostic test orders, test results and physician notes, which are vital to a complete health information network. As a result, the United States—which had a key role in the creation of personal computers, the rise of the consumer Internet, the mapping of the human genome and using technology to cut costs—lags behind Denmark, the Netherlands and some other industrialized nations when it comes to moving medical records into the digital age. [Read more](#) *Reuters*, July 27, 2007

For Diabetic Cyclist, Spirit is His Weapon

Diabetes has taught Bob Heyer a few balancing tricks in the past 27 years. He's learned to ride his bike, prick his finger and check his blood sugar at the same time. His mind computes carbohydrate-to-insulin ratios at warp speed. Multitasking helped the Issaquah man and his team of diabetic cyclists as they pedaled 3,052 miles day and night in the grueling Race Across America (RAAM) ride last month. [Read more](#) *The Seattle Times*, July 19, 2007

If you have suggestions about the content of this Update or would like to submit news to possibly include in future Updates, contact Diane Giese at (206) 448-2570 ext 117 or diane@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org.