



Update to the Community April 10, 2008

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Greetings Community Member,

We continue to receive overwhelmingly positive reviews of our first Community Checkup report (www.wac.ommunitycheckup.org). Work on the next report is well underway. Meanwhile, we have a lot of exciting news on other fronts. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt came to Seattle last month to recognize the Alliance as one of 14 community organizations named as a Chartered Value Exchange, a distinction awarded to leaders in transforming health care. Also, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has awarded the Alliance a \$50,000 communications grant to help raise awareness of the Community Checkup. Read on for more information about these and other activities.

To find out more about joining the Alliance, go to the [sign-up page on our website](#).

Margaret Stanley
Executive Director

Progress At-A-Glance

Thanks to the hard work of the Board, committees, workgroups, volunteers and staff, the Alliance continues to make progress, including:

- **Reached the next stage of eValue8, a program of the National Business Coalition on Health (NBCH)** that allows purchasers to evaluate health plans based on national guidelines and standards.. This progress is due to the hard work done by all six participating health plans that submitted their information to NBCH for scoring. Once the results are available, all 10 participating purchasers will review the scores and agree on targeted areas for improvement. Health plan site visits are scheduled for mid-June. Special thanks to Merck & Company, which provided a grant of \$25,000 to help fund the cost of this program.
- **Added new data suppliers for the second Community Checkup report.** Data from these new organizations will be added to updated data from the 14 health plans and self-insured purchasers that provided data for the first report. For the second report, we expect to add data from Medicaid (fee-for-service), Alaska Airlines and Snohomish County. The second report will be available later this year.
- **Approved the list of hospital measures that will be included in the second Community Checkup report.** The results for these measures will be drawn

directly from the CMS "Hospital Compare" website, and incorporated into the Community Checkup for a more comprehensive look at regional health care.

- **Conducted a survey of librarians from all six library systems in the Puget Sound region, then convened all six systems to discuss the results and next steps** for action. The Alliance and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services developed the survey on health information requests and resources to identify ways to connect patients with useful health information. Several pilot programs are now being considered by the Alliance and the partner library systems.
- **Achieved the status of [Chartered Value Exchange \(CVE\)](#)** designated by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. CVE are noted for fostering collaboration and producing public reports on health care performance. CVEs are eligible to receive Medicare information to use in performance reporting and to participate in a learning network run by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.
- **Expanded the Consumer Engagement Team (CET)** to include representatives from a wide range of organizations such as the American Diabetes Association, the Cross Cultural Health Care Program, the Washington Health Foundation, and the Washington State Nurses Association. The new CET is already at work on a number of activities to promote health literacy.
- **Awarded \$50,000 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** to support communication outreach that encourages individuals to use the Community Checkup report to help improve health care quality and affordability.

Want to find out more? *Keep reading!*

Welcome to the Alliance!

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The Alliance now has 172 participating organizations and 57 individuals. Since our last Update, the following groups and individuals have joined the Alliance:

- Abbott Laboratories
- Alta Kendall
- Ann Trezise
- Carol Corporation
- Carol Eagles
- Cephalon Inc
- Colby Branham
- Craig Riggs
- Karrie Sanderson
- Karson Bennett
- Hon. Larry Seaquist
- Lynn Hagerman Associates
- Maveron LLC
- Scott Plack Sound Integrative Health
- Squaxin Island Tribe
- Towers Perrin
- WA State Smile Partners

- William Brunkhorst

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. Visit our website to see [a full list of our participants](#). To join, go to the [sign-up page on our website](#) or contact Sean McCliment at [sean@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org](mailto:sean@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org)

***Reminder:** Any organization or individual who has joined the Alliance can access a wide range of Alliance materials by logging into the Participant- Only section of our website. Participants are also welcome to attend Alliance committee, workgroup and Board meetings.*

### Current and Upcoming Events and Opportunities

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Washington Policy Center 2008 Health Care Conference will be Tuesday, May 13th, from 7:30- 1:30 at the Double Tree Hotel in SeaTac. The cost is \$65 per person for breakfast, lunch and all conference panels, or \$35 per person for the keynote lunch featuring Grace-Marie Turner of the Galen Institute. To register, go to <https://secure.washingtonpolicy.org/hcc2008.php> or contact Anna Carroll at acarroll@washingtonpolicy.org or (206) 937-9691.

Several area pharmacies now offer hundreds of generic drugs for only \$4 for a 30-day supply. Such pharmacies include: Fred Meyer, QFC, Wal-Mart and all Kroger stores (Ralph's, CityMarket, Dillons', Smiths and many others)

For the latest on upcoming events and opportunities, visit the [events page](#) on the Alliance website.

The Alliance in the News

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#### **Sims Receives National Award for Health Reform**

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), a Washington, D.C. non-profit and a leader in advancing health care quality, has tapped Ron Sims for its 2008 Health Quality Award for his work founding the Puget Sound Health Alliance and pioneering the county's employee wellness initiative. [Read more](#)

#### **Tracking Quality Health Care**

Sharing information in the digital-age seems like an easy task. But the health care industry is still catching up. That's the assessment from the nation's top health official. But one local initiative has caught the fed's attention. KPLU Health & Science reporter Gary Davis explains. *KPLU 88.5 FM, March 21, 2008* [Link to story](#)

#### **Practical Prescriptions for Health Care Reform**

No single remedy will cure all that ails our health care system. Rather, each of health care's stakeholders -- that's all of us, folks, institutions and individuals -- must take sensible, incremental steps toward improving the quality of care and containing costs. *The Everett Herald (editorial) February 12, 2008* [Read more](#)

**A Path to Better Health** While state and federal elected officials are planning major surgery on the nation's health-care system, a local group is starting with a shrewder approach: taking the patient's temperature. The Puget Sound Health Alliance last week

released "Community Checkup," its first report on the effectiveness of the health care people are getting compared to the best, most cost-efficient practices. *The Seattle Times (editorial), February 6, 2008* [Read more](#)

### **Community Checkup Media Briefing**

[View streaming video](#) of the unveiling of the first Community Checkup report at the Puget Sound Health Alliance media briefing on January 31, 2008. King County Television, February 2, 2008

### **Alliance: We have work to do on patients' care**

New data produced by the Puget Sound Health Alliance about how well doctors in the Puget Sound region care for patients give everyone a tool to improve health care - and thereby hold down surging medical costs, which have been hammering employers and governments alike. *The Puget Sound Business Journal, February 1, 2008* [Read more](#)

### **Report: Puget Sound WA Patients Missing Preventative Checkups**

A report released today says about 20 percent of heart disease or diabetes patients in the Puget Sound did not have their cholesterol checked at least once a year. The Seattle-based Puget Sound Health Alliance produced the report. *The Associated Press, February 1, 2008* [Read more](#)

### **Report Card Grades Region's Health Care Clinics**

The Puget Sound Health Alliance's first annual report card came out Thursday. It analyzed outpatient claims data for 1.6 million people in Pierce, Thurston, King, Kitsap and Snohomish counties, and concluded that there's room for improvement. *The Tacoma News Tribune, February 1, 2008* [Read more](#)

### **Report Points Out Ways Health Care Can Improve**

Up to one-fifth of patients in the Puget Sound area who need regular cholesterol screenings for diabetes or heart disease are falling through the cracks, a new report says. "Some of us are not getting the care we need," said Dr. David Fleming, chairman of the board of the private, nonprofit Puget Sound Health Alliance, which produced the study. The report was designed to identify gaps in the region's health care system and to suggest where improvements need to be made. *The Olympian, February 1, 2008* [Read more](#)

### **Local Health Care 'Checkup' Finds Room For Improvement: Survey looked at patients, clinics in 5 counties**

In an effort to identify areas in local health care that need improving, the Puget Sound Health Alliance conducted a "community checkup" of 1.6 million patients, finding that many measures were below standard. Results of that checkup were released Thursday, with alliance members calling the findings a baseline to begin changing care for the better. *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, February 1, 2008* [Read more](#)

### **Nibbling at the Edges of Health Care**

Kate Riley highlights the efforts of the Alliance to improve quality and reduce costs in the Puget Sound region. *The Seattle Times (editorial), January 21, 2008* [Read more](#)

### **Suggestions or Comments about this Update?**

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Contact Us Form: <http://www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org/contact.cfm>

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