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## Update to the Community

November 2008

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### Dear Community Member,

*Next Thursday November 13, we will release the next Community Checkup report. This updated and expanded report nearly triples the number of results for medical groups and clinics (i.e., 46 medical groups at more than 170 clinics across the Puget Sound region), adds asthma as a measurement area, and now includes measures for hospital care using data pulled from several public sources. This report is another significant milestone for the Alliance and the community at large.*

*Work continues on many other fronts as well. For example, we are deep in strategic planning for 2009. At its October retreat, the Board identified priority areas for further consideration -- more on that below.*

*Regardless of changes brought about by the results of the election -- at national, state and local levels -- the Alliance's work advancing transparency, promoting value and engaging individuals will continue to be critically important to bringing about safer, more effective health care at a price more people can afford.*

*I hope you will consider joining us. To learn more about participating in the Alliance, see [www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org/join/index.html](http://www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org/join/index.html).*

*Regards,*

*Mary McWilliams  
Executive Director*

## Progress At-A-Glance

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

- **Completed reasonableness review process to get input from all medical groups whose results will be in the November Community Checkup report**, including privately sharing the draft results, then the final results, with the medical groups via the Alliance's secure web portal, funded in part by the Regence Foundation.
- **Refined the Alliance's likely strategic focus areas for 2009**, building on the continuing work of regularly producing the Community Checkup report. These areas include reporting on health care "resource use" to identify variation and possible inefficiencies, a payment reform pilot focused on promoting medical homes, and a coordinated program to improve care for people with depression.
- **Participated in an expert panel - convened by the Washington State Department of Health - to help shape the upcoming Medical Home Collaborative** due to be launched in 2009.
- **Began collaboration with Minnesota Community Measurement** (a coalition like the Alliance) to identify leading edge ways to ensure our online public reporting is as effective as possible in engaging individuals in their health and health care.
- **Shared Alliance experience with national audiences**, including:
  - Demonstrated our Community Checkup report website at the Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality conference
  - Presented consumer engagement insights from an RWJF consumer survey at the Aligning Forces for Quality Consumer Engagement Learning Community meeting.
  - Presented information at the AcademyHealth's October webinar on "Using Information to Help Providers Improve." We also shared suggestions on potential roles for state government to lead and/or participate in quality improvement and payment reform.

**Want to find out more?** *Keep reading!*

## Welcome to the Alliance!

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The Alliance now has 173 participating organizations and 61 individual participants. Since the last Update, AARP and Kim Nguyen have joined the Alliance. Welcome!

## Upcoming Events and Opportunities

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**Patient-Centered Access and Communication- How Can We Use Our EMRs to Make It Work?** Join the Qualis Health training series on practical changes in workflow to help primary care practices. The November 13 teleconference from 11:30-12:30 will focus on how to use EMRs to enhance communications with patients. Hosting the session are Jeff Hummel, MD MPH, Qualis Health Medical Director for Healthcare Informatics and Ted Eytan, MD MS MPH, Medical Director of Delivery Systems Operations Improvement, Permanente Federation, LLC. Continuing education credits are available for physicians and nurses who participate in the teleconference and complete an evaluation of the session.

-- To register, [click here](#).

--To learn more about the series go to:

<http://www.qualishealthmedicare.org/QI/EMRworkflow.cfm>

**Value-Based Benefit Design Webinar--Featured speaker Mark Fendrick, MD of the University of Michigan Center for Value Based Insurance Design, will discuss VBBD concepts, examples in the workplace and the latest VBBD findings.** The webinar will take place on Tuesday, November 18th from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm PST. To register, go to <http://mail.benfield.com/forms/webinar/webinar.html>. This program is hosted by the Oregon Coalition of Health Care Purchasers and supported by sanofi-aventis.

## News of Note

### Doctors in Study Prefer Whites to Blacks: UW Researchers Take a Look at Physician Biases

Racial disparities have long been documented in health care, but a University of Washington study on doctors' possible biases is validating the feelings of many African-American patients. Released Tuesday, the study found that most doctors unconsciously prefer white people to black people. The exception was black doctors, who exhibited no preference for either race. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer, October 2008* [Read more](#)

## Suggestions or Comments about this Update?

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