
Update to the Community

December 2008

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Dear Community Member,

This has been a landmark year for the Alliance. We have published our first two Community Checkup reports with comparisons of medical group and hospital care, received a second substantial three- year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and mapped a course to deepen our impact on health care quality and efficiency.

Our 2009 Strategic Plan includes a variety of initiatives to drive improvement by increasing transparency of health care information and realigning incentives to promote and reward more effective and affordable health care. We will explore at a deeper level how to support the creation of primary care 'medical homes' and improve care for people with depression. See below for more detail. Meanwhile, we are busy working on the next Community Checkup, scheduled for public release in mid-2009.

We would welcome your participation in these and other exciting initiatives in the coming year. To learn more about joining the Alliance, [visit our website](#).

Best wishes to you and your families for the holidays and the New Year.

Regards,

Mary McWilliams
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:

- **Published an expanded Community Checkup report.** The updated Community Checkup, released to the public on November 13, now includes information on care provided to 1.6 million residents by 46 medical groups at more than 170 clinics across King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish and Thurston counties, as well as care provided at 30 hospitals.
- **Began an analysis of Community Checkup results by payer population -** commercial, managed Medicaid and Medicaid fee-for-service. We have incorporated newly available Medicaid fee-for- service data from the State Department of Social and Health Services into our aggregated dataset, with the intent to analyze the results by payer type for a special report to be released in February 2009. Draft results are now available on our secure portal for

participating medical groups to review and give feedback to the Alliance. *Medical groups have been asked to notify the Alliance of any data issues on or before January 14th to allow time to resolve items prior to the report release date.*

- **Finalized the Alliance Strategic Plan for 2009**, which includes maintaining and improving current data sources and developing new data sources for performance reporting; recognizing providers for improvement over time; exploring how to align incentives to promote medical homes and/or improvement in care for people with depression; and continued collaboration in several community-based activities to stimulate health care quality improvement.
- **Developed a multi-year workplan for the Aligning Forces for Quality project** sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Focus areas include public reporting, consumer engagement, quality improvement and health equity.
- **Completed an initial environmental scan to set the foundation for work on health equity issues** in 2009 and beyond. We identified existing efforts in the region that present opportunities for the Alliance to build on and augment for possible use in performance reporting, quality improvement and coordination across community groups to reduce health disparities. Our initial research confirmed that the Puget Sound region is home to many leading programs and experts in health equity and cultural competency, but more work remains. If you are interested in getting involved in our health equity work over the coming year, please let us know by contacting Diane Giese at diane@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org
- **Showcased the Community Checkup report at a national meeting of Aligning Forces for Quality** communities in Washington, DC. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation selected the Alliance report as an example for others around the country to learn from and emulate as they develop similar reports for use by people in the local community.

Want to find out more? *Keep reading!*

Upcoming Event

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#### **National Health and Productivity Forum**

The Integrated Benefits Institute (IBI) and the National Business Coalition on Health (NBCH) will hold its first annual Health and Productivity Forum on February 9 -11, 2009 in Los Angeles at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza. The forum features a variety of health and productivity topics, including a preconference workshop on 2/9 from 4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. focused on coalitions' work to measure health and productivity. Dr. Ron Kessler from Harvard Medical School will address how self-reported data fit in. To register, send an email to NBCH Director of Membership & Communications Carly McKeon ([cmckeon@nbch.org](mailto:cmckeon@nbch.org)).

## Alliance in the News

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### **Community Checkup: Room to Improve**

The Puget Sound Health Alliance has unveiled a "community checkup" report that tracks whether local residents are being treated according to best practices nationally in such critical areas as diabetes, asthma and heart conditions. It's a particularly useful tool for health care professionals, who are genuinely interested in doing their best, but it also has implications for consumers, employers and the region generally. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer Editorial Board, November 17, 2008*

[Read more](#)

### **Report: Seattle-area medical treatment varies widely**

Hospitals and clinics across the Puget Sound region were inconsistent in their care of certain medical conditions, including eye exams for diabetic patients and blood clot prevention for heart surgery patients, according to a "Community Checkup" report from the Puget Sound Health Alliance. *American Nurses Association SmartBrief, November 17, 2008*

[Read more](#)

### **Medical care varies widely at area clinics and hospitals**

A new report shows the quality of medical care varies widely among Puget Sound-area clinics and hospitals, and many patients fail to get standard treatments for diabetes, heart surgery and other health problems. *Seattle Times, November 14, 2008*

[Read more](#)

### **Quality of health care varies widely in the region, report says**

Many patients in the Puget Sound region are not getting the health care recommended by national guidelines, according to a new study. The study also found that quality of care in the region varies widely from hospital to hospital, from clinic to clinic, and even from provider to provider within same medical group or institution.

*Seattle/LocalHealthGuide, November 14, 2008*

[Read more](#)

### **Comparing local clinics, hospitals: new online tool**

A new free service comparing health care at clinics and hospitals in King, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston and Kitsap counties is now online. The Puget Sound Health Alliance yesterday unveiled its "Community Checkup" report on healthcare performance in the region. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer, November 14, 2008*

[Read more](#)

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

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