

Dear Community Member,

I'm pleased to report that we're making excellent progress on the second Community Checkup report, which will include more than 40 medical groups with approximately 150 clinic locations, along with new measures on hospital and asthma care. We plan to have the draft private results available for review by medical groups later this month.

At the same time, we are moving forward on several fronts to enhance health care value and address rising costs. Read on for more details.

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:

- ✓ **Received a \$50,000 grant from the Regence Foundation** to fund the building of a secure web-based portal to enable clinics to view their private performance report results. The portal will provide clinics with immediate, secure access to all performance report results for their specific clinic, including data regarding individual providers. (The public Community Checkup report does not show individual results, but instead offers results for clinic locations and clinic systems.)
- ✓ **Registered about 30 more medical groups ("clinic systems") to include in the next Community Checkup report.** The updated and expanded report will show results for a total of 44 medical groups with about 150 clinic locations in King, Kitsap, Pierce Snohomish and Thurston counties. Draft results will be available for medical groups to review in mid-August. Each group will be able to access their own draft results through a new, secure Web-based portal and will be asked to notify the Alliance by mid-September with any questions or concerns about the data. The report will show results for clinics with 6 or more clinicians (including Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants) that have enough patients to ensure that the results are reliable. We expect to finalize the report and release it to the public in November.
- ✓ **Unveiled to the Board the draft version of the new Community Checkup report website,** which will allow patients, doctors, employers and others to search and sort the report and related resources by different conditions as well as by clinic name and location. The web-based report will also show results for hospital care provided in the region. The new web-based report is scheduled to be publicly launched in September.

- ✓ **Held a forum involving local physician leaders and purchasers and Diane Stewart, Director of the California Quality Collaborative and Director of Improvement for the Pacific Business Group on Health**, to draw from best practices as we consider establishing some form of a Quality Improvement Learning Network in this region.

Welcome to the Alliance!

The Alliance now has 177 participating organizations and 60 individual participants.

Current and Upcoming Events and Opportunities

- ✓ **Free Hypertension Screenings at your Workplace** -- Alliance organizations, including Virginia Mason, Hope Heart Institute and Novartis are participating in a program to increase community and employee awareness of hypertension. As a part of the program, Novartis is offering employers and other organizations a free blood pressure screening day at worksites. Participating employees qualify for a drawing for a pair of free tickets to a Seahawks home game. If you are interested conducting a screening day at your workplace, contact Darren Hageman darren.hageman@novartis.com.
- ✓ **Medical Home Pilot Grants** -- Qualis Health has received a grant from the Commonwealth Fund for a 5-year demonstration project to transform safety-net clinics into patient-centered medical homes. Qualis, in partnership with the MacColl Institute for Healthcare Innovation, will select and support four organizations to serve as "Regional Coordinating Centers" to implement the program among participating clinics. Grantee organizations will receive financial support and technical assistance. For details, contact Kathryn Phillips, MPH, Project Manager, Medical Home Initiative, at: kathrynp@qualishealth.org or 206-364-9700 ext 2007, or go to www.qualishealth.org

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

Alliance in the News

Prescriptions for Health Information The Puget Sound Health Alliance is partnering with several organizations in the South Sound on a pilot program around prescriptions for health information. *The Olympian, July 13, 2008*

[Read more](#)

Other Health News

Doctors are 'in' for Online Evaluation

Dozens of Web sites that permit people to rate, review, spin or flame their doctors have sprung up in the past year, operating in much the same way as online services that help people find hotels or plumbers. Patients and site operators say the trend is good

for consumers and good for health care. Thoughtful doctors, they say, will provide better customer service because of the feedback, and the bad ones will no longer be able to hide. Many physicians say the reviews are skewed by disgruntled patients and are unfair, pushing some doctors to near-ruin after a single post. *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 2008

[Read more](#)

Paying Doctors to Ignore Patients

The longstanding push-pull between Medicare and Congress has erupted again. Last week, Congress, overriding a presidential veto, canceled Medicare's scheduled 10.6 percent cut in payment rates for doctors, and instead raised the rates 1.1 percent. But this action fails to address the problem with the Medicare payment system, which is not the amounts doctors are paid but the way their payments are calculated. *The New York Times Op-Ed*, July 24, 2008

[Read more](#)

Medical Procedures Rated by State's Expert Comparison Shoppers

Since 2006, an obscure panel of 11 citizens has been serving as the state's scientific watchdog on medical issues. Its mission: Review clinical evidence on potentially questionable medical technologies and decide whether their track records and costs merit coverage by state agencies. *The Seattle Times*, July 7, 2008

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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.