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Update to the Community December 12, 2007

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Greetings Community Member,

We have much to celebrate this holiday season! The first public report on health care performance for the region will be ready at the end of January. This accomplishment is a testament to the hundreds of physicians and other health care professionals, employers, unions, health plans and consumers who have volunteered time and expertise to creating this report for the community. We've completed the technical validation with the 14 health plans and purchasers who supplied data for the report, sent confidential drafts of the first report to the clinic systems that volunteered to participate in the first report, and are now in the process of collecting input from the clinics and refining the report before it is finalized. Give us your input on the draft format of the public report, now available on our [website](#).

Even though the holiday season is here, we are very busy at the Alliance. Thank you for your continued support and involvement. Warm holiday wishes to all!

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:

- **Completed draft reports on health care performance and distributed for confidential review by the clinic systems who volunteered to have their results shown in the first report.** Alliance staff have met with each of these clinic systems to review the draft results and are now incorporating their feedback to refine and finalize the report before it is publicly released next month.
- **Began participation in eValue8**, a program that allows employers and union trusts to consistently evaluate health plans based on national guidelines and

standards. The Alliance will lead the eValue8 effort in the region, starting with six local health plans and ten purchasers who have signed up for the program for 2008.

- **Convened an Affordability Work Group**, consisting of decision-makers from major employers, doctors, hospitals and health plans, to recommend health care cost control strategies.
- **Developed recommendations for how to measure hospital quality, to be added to the performance reports in 2008.** Areas of focus include measures endorsed by the National Quality Forum in the areas of heart care, pneumonia, surgical care, hospital acquired infections, patient safety, and patient experience.
- **Added resources to the Alliance website to help patients find user-friendly health information and talk with their doctors**, and to help doctors and other health care providers talk with patients. The resources, developed in collaboration with several community organizations, are now available [on the Alliance website](#).
- **Distributed "healthy heart" checklists at Seahawks games and Costco locations.** This collaborative program involves the Seattle Seahawks, many Alliance members (WaMu, Virginia Mason, UW Medicine and Novartis) and Costco. Blood pressure screenings are offered free at Seahawks home games. So far, more than 2,000 people in the region have had their blood pressure checked.
- **Developed resources to help individuals, employers and doctors use Health Risk Assessments (HRAs) to promote better health.** Partnered with the Washington Health Foundation to highlight HRAs in the annual Healthiest Business Challenge. Find these materials [on the Alliance website](#).
- **Completed the Clinical Improvement Team report on Prevention.** The report, adopted by the Board in October, includes specific recommendations for effective steps that doctors, patients, employers and health plans can take to detect and prevent disease. Areas of emphasis include physical activity and nutrition, tobacco use, the use of aspirin to reduce the risk of cardiovascular problems, colorectal cancer screening, influenza immunizations, and childhood immunizations.

Want to find out more? Keep reading!

Welcome to the Alliance!

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The Alliance now has 163 participating organizations and 49 individuals. Since our last Update, the following groups and individuals have joined the Alliance:

- Radia
- ARC Architects
- The Hay Group
- LiveWisely Wellness
- Puget Sound Health Partners
- Watson Wyatt Worldwide
- Best Doctors Inc.
- Center for Health Improvement
- Healthcare Actuaries

- Christopher Mendez
- Diane Standiford
- Nancee Wildermuth
- Amy Heckard
- Janet Primomo
- Franciscan Medical Group
- Gilead Sciences
- Homewatch Caregivers of Western Washington
- Iverson Genetic Diagnostics
- Northwest Primary Care
- Sound Mental Health
- Sigrid Guyton
- Stan Sorscher

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 Opportunities

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**Attention Primary Care Physicians and Other Providers:** Enroll by December 31 for the Washington State Collaborative to Improve Health, co-sponsored by the Alliance. It begins in January 2008. Since 1999, more than 140 primary care teams in Washington have reported success helping patients to lower blood pressure, reduce LDL ("bad") cholesterol, and control blood sugar. Teams have had great success in empowering patients with chronic diseases to take more control in managing their health needs. New funding was awarded this month for pediatric topics: asthma, medical home, or overweight prevention. Adult focus areas are asthma, diabetes, or hypertension. All practices are encouraged to participate, with preference for those with five or fewer physicians and first-time participants. Tuition is free. Expense stipends up to \$5,000 are available to practices that accept Medicaid. Registration materials are available at the [Department of Health website](#). Contact Francisco Arias-Reyes at 360-236-3738 or [Francisco.arias-reyes@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Francisco.arias-reyes@doh.wa.gov).

**Call for Nominations: Scribner Courage in Health Care Award** is bestowed to a health care professional who has made an extraordinary contribution to the health of people in the Pacific Northwest through the exhibition of personal courage, within or outside of traditional "systems." Emphasis is given to extraordinary service, innovation and professional courage over time that has resulted in meaningful change and improvement in health care. Health care professionals working primarily in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska, or Montana are eligible. **Submission deadline is February 29, 2008.** Send a statement describing why the nominee deserves this award to: Scribner Courage in Health Care Awards, First Choice Health, Attn: Dr. Ze'ev Young, 600 University Street, Suite #1400, Seattle, WA 98101. Include contact information for yourself and the nominee. For more information, call (206)-268-2430.

**Sponsorship Opportunity: The Washington Health Foundation** (WHF) is seeking sponsors for an upcoming tobacco cessation summit that is part of the Healthiest State in the Nation Campaign. A select group of 30 local leaders will meet January 7-8 to develop a workplace-based action plan to reduce tobacco use in the region. Sponsorship levels range from \$1,000-10,000. For more information, contact Dawn Robbins at WHF by email at dawnr@whf.org or 503-774-4146.

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

### Alliance News of Note

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Margaret Stanley Retiring

The Puget Sound Health Alliance Executive Director, Margaret Stanley, will be retiring in mid-2008. The Alliance is seeking a new Executive Director who can build on the outstanding accomplishments of the current leadership team and Board of Directors. To learn more, go to the job listing [on the Alliance website](#).

Profile of a Community Leader: Puget Sound Health Alliance

In the December publication of *The Cornerstone*, the federal Department of Health and Human Services profiles the Alliance as the first Community Leader for Value-driven Health Care in the nation. [Read more.](#)

Quality Care Delivered Here

Now it's easy to find out what clinics and hospitals have received recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). [The Alliance website](#) includes a listing of local organizations with NCQA recognition and other quality awards. To receive NCQA recognition, organizations must pass a rigorous, comprehensive review and report annually on their performance in certain quality-related categories. The recognition is an indication that the organization is well-managed and delivers high- quality care and service.

Other Health News

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**Hospitals Putting Bigger Emphasis on Hand Hygiene** -- Before MRSA -- methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* -- seeped into everyday conversations and the public wondered where the antibiotic-resistant bug would strike next, Washington hospitals were looking at ways to reduce infections within their walls. The solution: Wash your hands. The surprise: That so few health care professionals were regularly doing so. [Read more](#) *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, December 7, 2007*

**Colon Cancer Gets Special Treatment: Researchers Want to Encourage More Screenings for Disease** -- Colorectal cancer is the third-most- common cancer found in men and women in this country. The American Cancer Society estimates that there will be about 112,340 new cases of colon cancer and 41,420 new cases of rectal cancer in 2007 in the United States. Combined, they will cause about 52,180 deaths -- and doctors said many could be prevented if enough people got screened when they should. During the next four years, the Group Health Center for Health Studies will look at how physicians can get patients to screen more often and get follow- up exams. [Read more](#) *The Seattle Post- Intelligencer, December 3, 2007*

**Dr. Drug Rep** -- An inside look at how pharmaceutical companies make inroads with doctors to sell certain prescription drugs. [Read more](#) *The New York Times Magazine, November 25, 2007*

**A Model for Health Care That Pays for Quality** -- Seeing low fees for family doctors as a weak link in the nation's health care system, some big employers and health insurers are seeking new ways to pay doctors to reward high-quality medical care. [Read more](#) *The New York Times, November 7, 2007*

For the latest news and much more, visit the [Alliance website](#).

**Suggestions or Comments about this Update?**

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