
Update to the Community

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Dear Community Member

I want to call your attention to the Alliance's new report, presenting differences in care for Medicaid vs. commercially-insured populations. The report incorporates Medicaid fee-for-service data. In many ways, the report findings confirmed expectations - namely that results for the Medicaid population differ from commercially-insured results at the medical group level, but perhaps more importantly, the report identifies issues for further inquiry. For more information, please visit our website: www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org.

One thing on which there is broad agreement is the need to reform the health care payment system. But the jury is still out on the best way of maintaining a high level of quality services while reducing cost. The Alliance has been exploring new approaches in the health care payment system such as our research and tracking of the patient centered medical home. This new structure delivers primary health care through a 'team partnership' that works to ensure health care services are provided in a comprehensive manner. Harold Miller and his team at the Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform explain why this approach might work and elaborate on some of the issues which need to be addressed in payment reform in a series of policy briefs. You can download their policy briefs for free on the center's website: www.chqpr.org.

Regards,

Mary McWilliams
Alliance 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:

- **Report Comparing Care for People on Medicaid vs. Other Types of Insurance released.** The Alliance examined differences between the commercially-insured population and those who receive health coverage through Medicaid. Please continue reading below for more information.
- **2009 Community Checkup draft results now being reviewed by medical**

- **groups.** The final report is scheduled for release in July 2009.
- **Rules for using the Community Checkup results changed, starting with the next report.** The Board recently approved revisions to the "Rules of Use" of the Community Checkup results. Clinics, health plans and employers are now allowed to use the results for business purposes, including marketing, contract discussions and benefit planning, and to raise the bar for quality community-wide.
- **Alliance receives \$50k communications grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.** The funds will help the Alliance to build involvement in reducing health disparities in King, Pierce, Snohomish, Kitsap and Thurston counties.
- **Alliance welcomes 5 new organizations as participants this month.**

Want to find out more? *Keep reading!*

Report Comparing Care for People on Medicaid vs. Other Types of Insurance

The Alliance is pleased to announce that a special Community Checkup report: Differences in Care for Medicaid vs. Commercially-Insured Populations is now available online at www.wacomunitycheckup.org and www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org. This report raises questions about differences in how clinics perform when comparing those covered by Medicaid and commercially-insured populations. The purpose of this report is to motivate physicians, patients, health plans, Medicaid, purchasers and others in the community to explore these issues and then work together to improve health care effectiveness for everyone in the region. In conjunction with a new \$50k grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Alliance intends to engage others in reducing health disparities in our community. Participants are invited to join us for a detailed overview of this special report at the All Alliance meeting on May 28th. See below for more detail.

Washington Health Information Collaborative Has \$500k for EMR Grants

The Washington Health Information Collaborative (WHIC), of which the Alliance is a member, makes funding available for technology to help doctors and hospitals deliver better care. For the fourth consecutive year, WHIC will award grants of up to \$25k to clinics and hospitals in Washington state and other parts of the Pacific Northwest. Special thanks to First Choice Health for providing the initial \$500k for 2009. The Collaborative is a public-private partnership of First Choice Health, the Washington State Health Care Authority, Qualis Health and the Puget Sound Health Alliance, with a mission to improve the quality of patient care through the use of information technology. For more information go to www.wahealthinfocollaborative.org

Alliance Co-sponsoring ICU Safe Care Initiative

Washington State hospitals are among a select group which have been invited by the American Hospital Association and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to participate in a two-year Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Safe Care Initiative. This initiative expands skills of ICU staff to reduce patient harm while focusing on eliminating infections. It is based upon the work of Dr. Peter Pronovost, Johns Hopkins University, and The Michigan Health & Hospital Association's Keystone Center for Patient Safety and Quality. The initial project in Michigan resulted in nearly 1,800 lives saved, 129,000 excess hospital days avoided, and \$247 million in health care dollars saved. All hospital ICUs can benefit from participating in this evidence-based initiative to prevent patient

harm and reduce infections. Special thanks to the Washington State Hospital Association, who is taking the lead in this work.

Coalition to Reduce Preventable Re-hospitalizations Created in WA

Washington is one of three states selected by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and the Commonwealth Fund for an initiative on reducing hospital readmissions. The project, led by the Washington State Hospital Association, is a four-year project and began May 1, 2009. The focus will be in three areas: (1) measurement to determine what drives preventable readmissions and to inform hospitals and other stakeholders about readmission rates; (2) identifying best practices; and, (3) developing/ implementing strategies to reduce readmissions. The Alliance is actively engaged in this coalition.

Alliance Work Highlighted In ColorsNW

The Alliance was highlighted as part of a series in ColorsNW examining ethnic disparities in the American health care system. The article explored some of the ways the local health care community is combating these disparities to bring balance to the U.S. health system. Go to <http://colorsnw.com> to read the full article.

Alliance Members Talk Health Care Costs at the White House

On May 11, President Obama convened business leaders to discuss ways to cut health costs. The President met with employers and unions whose innovations have produced promising results through innovative wellness and disease management programs. Sally Jewell, President and CEO of REI was among the list of workforce innovators present. For more details, read the [Boston Globe article](#).

Save the Dates

- **All Alliance Meeting - May 28** - What are the differences in care provided to the population on Medicaid versus the population covered under 'commercial insurance' and what insights might it give about disparities in this region? After reviewing the findings from the Alliance's latest special report comparing health care performance by payer type, Dr. Kalahn Taylor-Clark of the Brookings Institute in Washington DC will discuss national (and local!) work being conducted to use performance measurement and other interventions to reduce disparities and improve health equity. May 28th from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. at the Seattle Public Library Microsoft Auditorium. This is open to Alliance participants only. Please RSVP to Natalie Moe at nmoe@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org
- **All Alliance Meeting - July 16** - Attend the roll-out of the next set of results in the Community Checkup report. This report reveals results for more clinics with updated data and measures. Be the first to see this important data, which can now be used for marketing, contract discussions, benefit planning and other business purposes in order to motivate and reward performance improvement. July 16th from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m., location TBD. This is open to Alliance participants only. Please RSVP to Natalie Moe at nmoe@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org

Upcoming Events

Tobacco Cessation Webinar - May 19

Smoking cessation is one of the most cost effective health interventions available. This upcoming webinar will focus on health plan performance on tobacco cessation and the effectiveness of health plan programs when the employer partners with the health plan. Dennis White, Senior Vice President of Value Based Purchasing at NBCH will provide a short synopsis of the results from the 2008 eValue8 (NBCH's evidence based RFI for health plan performance) based on over 1200 health plan responses. Dr. Patrick Courneya, Medical Director, Delivery Systems at HealthPartners will discuss the program that HealthPartners provides - a best practice plan based on the eValue8 results. To join the webinar, please go to <https://premconf.webex.com/j/remconf/j.php?ED=97186227&UID=0>

Washington Policy Center's Annual Health Care Conference - June 3

Save the date for Washington Policy Center's 7th Annual Health Care Conference in Seattle. The conference features Dr. Steven Eastaugh of George Washington University and a Health Care Advisor to President Obama. Health care leaders from both parties and the Governor's office will brief attendees on newly-enacted health care bills. Experts will present the latest information on health care and new ways to deliver health care services. Participants will examine the demographics of the 45 million uninsured in the country and who they actually represent. For more information and to register, please visit <http://www.washingtonpolicy.org/events>

Healthcare Unbound Conference: E-Health and Other Innovative Applications in Health Care to Manage Disease and Promote Wellness - June 22-23

The Sixth Annual Healthcare Unbound Conference & Exhibition will take place on June 22-23 in Seattle, WA. Come to the nationally recognized conference and exhibition, conducted annually by the Center for Business Innovation. This year the focus is innovative applications of remote monitoring, home telehealth and e-health to manage diseases and to promote wellness. Key topics of this year's event include: 1) government initiatives, including the economic stimulus bill and regulatory changes, and their impact on the market, 2) the patient centered medical home, 3) innovations in aging-in-place technologies, 4) the evolving role of wireless technologies, and 5) how the convergence of consumer and healthcare technologies will improve health outcomes and reduce costs. Note: Alliance participants get a \$100 discount off the registration fee. For more information, please visit <http://www.tcbi.org/index.php?conference=hu2009>

Suggestions or Comments about this Update?

Email: diane@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org

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