
Update to the Community

December 2009

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Dear Community Member

A few weeks ago, I joined two representatives from Harborview and CIGNA, plus a few other members of the Alliance staff, at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Aligning Forces for Quality National Meeting. Grantees of the program from all over the country gathered for three days in Phoenix to reflect on the common goal of our organizations - to increase the quality of health care delivered locally. While each coalition faces a unique environment, based on local political climate, demographics, funding and other factors, we had much to learn from others as well as presenting on topics such as: quality improvement, public reporting, and partnering with health plans. Because of your support for our work, our *Community Checkup* report has become a model in some respects and it is affirming to see other organizations moving along the same trajectory.

Remember to save the date for the next All Alliance meeting on January 7 when we will introduce plans for developing reports on the intensity of services, or resource use, as a way to begin to understand aspects of relative cost or efficiency. Also save the date for another All Alliance meeting on February 11, when we will focus on the issue of health equity. Please see below for more details.

Warm wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season.

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:

- **Developing a preliminary analysis for measuring resource use to be presented at the next All Alliance meeting.** More information is below.

- **Finalizing the 2010 Alliance Strategic Plan and Budget.** The Alliance Board of Directors approved the strategic plan at the December meeting.
- **Completing the data submission process by data suppliers for the 2010 Community Checkup report on medical groups.** See more information below.
- **Sponsoring the Seattle Chamber's event with Dr. Atul Gawande in January on The *Checklist Manifesto*.** See the events section for more information.

Want to find out more? *Keep reading!*

Progress on the 2010 Community Checkup Report on Medical Groups

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 Data suppliers have submitted their data for the 2010 Community Checkup report on medical groups. As part of the next step, the Alliance will be asking medical groups to update their provider rosters beginning in early January. The Alliance is working with Milliman on a new tool to simplify the process, so medical groups should refrain from updating their rosters until the Alliance distributes the new tool. The next Community Checkup report is scheduled to be publicly released in the Spring.

### **Save the Date: January 7 All Alliance Meeting on Resource Use**

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 Join us at the next All Alliance meeting for an introduction to the Alliance's plans for analyzing the relative intensity of services, or resource use. The program will include an overview of current national developments in resource use measurement by Dr. Mark Rattray, a review of work and recent blinded analyses by the Alliance's Resource Measurement Work Group, under the guidance of Jim Andrianos, plus commentary and discussion with a panel of Work group members - Gary McLaughlin (Overlake Hospital), Dr. Mike Tronolone (The PolyClinic), Peter Carpenter (ClearPoint) and Dr. Mary Kay O'Neill (CIGNA). The program will take place at the One Union Square Boardroom in downtown Seattle at 7:30 a.m. For more information and to RSVP, please contact Natalie Moe at nmoe@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org.

Save the Date: February 11 All Alliance Meeting on Health Equity, Plus Call for Posters

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 The All Alliance meeting on February 11 is focused on the topic of addressing health equity in both the national and local context. The program will include a keynote presentation by Dr. Reed Tuckson, Executive Vice President and Chief of Medical Affairs at United Health Care, followed by a discussion with a panel of regional provider organizations - Mark Secord (Neighborcare Health), Martine Pierre-Louis (Harborview), and Dr. Thomas Yetman (Pacific Medical Centers).

As a complement to our program, we'd like you to highlight the great work your organization has been doing to address health disparities based on race, ethnicity or language with a poster. All Alliance Participants are invited to showcase local projects to address these issues by sending us a short email answering the following questions:

- What was the challenge or problem you are addressing?

- Who is the audience or focus of your program or project?
- What approach did you take?
- What improvement do you expect and/or what results have you seen thus far?

**Please submit your "poster session" proposal by January 11 to be considered.** Posters should not exceed 24 x 36 inches. This invitation is open to all Alliance Participants. For questions, and to submit your program or project, please email [sarah@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org](mailto:sarah@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org).

### Follow the Alliance on Twitter @WAHealthCheckup

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The Alliance uses social media tools to help engage health care writers, reporters, and other interested members of the public in our Community Checkup report, events and health news. Follow us, send us your comments or just let us know what you are doing. Follow us [@WAHealthCheckup](https://twitter.com/WAHealthCheckup).

Washington Ranks 16th for Health System Performance

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The Commonwealth Fund produces a report assessing states' performance on health care relative to achievable benchmarks for 38 different indicators of access, quality, costs and health outcomes. The Fund's recent 2009 report demonstrated wide variation in performance across states. By enabling states to compare themselves with others on critical aspects of the health care system, the Commonwealth Fund hopes to motivate the development of strategies and action toward high performance.

In this second edition of the report, Washington received an overall ranking of 16th among the states. The state maintained the top quartile performance in two areas: "Avoidable Hospital Use and Costs" and "Healthy Lives". There was some improvement on the Access dimension from the last report, however Washington continues to lag behind on the "Prevention & Treatment" and "Equity" dimensions.

Washington showed high performance high on:

- Reduced hospital admissions for Home Health patients
- Reduced emergency room or urgent care visits by asthma patients
- Lower Infant death rate

Washington showed low performance on the following indicators, suggesting potential for improvement:

- Key recommended vaccination (five) for children aged 19-35 months
- Hospitalized patients receiving recommended care for heart attack, heart failure, and pneumonia
- At-risk adults and children foregoing medical checkup due to insurance and cost issues

The Commonwealth Fund is a private foundation that aims to promote high performing healthcare systems to achieve better access, higher efficiency and

improved quality especially for the most vulnerable populations in the community. Access the [full report](#).

**From The New Yorker: Health Care Costs in the Health Care Bill**

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Atul Gawande's latest article in *The New Yorker* examines the Senate version of the current health care bill with a pointed look at reforming the cost problem. Gawande hypothesizes that lacking a master plan for nationwide structural changes to curb costs may not be such a bad thing. Click [here](#) to view the full article.

Upcoming Events

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**Seattle Chamber presents Dr. Atul Gawande and *The Checklist Manifesto* - January 12th, 2010**

In *The Checklist Manifesto*, Dr. Atul Gawande finds successful people in many fields who all have one very simple thing in common: they turn to checklists to help them pull off some of the most difficult tasks. He explains that there are good checklists and bad checklists. His new book is about handling complexity that has become a fundamental part of everyone's job description in the modern world. Visit the [Seattle Chamber](#) for more information and to register for the event.

**Suggestions or Comments about this Update?**

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