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## **Century Mark Reached by Puget Sound Health Alliance**

*Region's employers show strong interest in health care quality and cost improvement*

SEATTLE, May 22, 2006 – Interest in the Puget Sound Health Alliance's work across five-counties to reduce health care costs while improving health care quality is growing, based on the number of area employers and others joining the non-profit collaborative organization. More than 100 organizations from the public and private sector have joined the Puget Sound Health Alliance. These organizations purchase health care coverage for about 900,000 people in Pierce, Snohomish, Kitsap, Thurston and King counties.

“It's exciting – for the first time in many years, there is a critical mass of local employers, consumers, physicians, unions, hospitals and others working in a collaborative, constructive way to improve health care quality and reduce costs,” said Margaret Stanley, executive director of the Puget Sound Health Alliance. “There is a real demand for improving the local health system by rewarding high quality care, patient satisfaction and better value for your health care dollar.”

Puget Sound Health Alliance participants include: private and public employers of all sizes such as The Boeing Company, REI, Starbucks, Washington Mutual, Port Blakely Companies, Puget Sound Energy, the Washington State Health Care Authority, and several county and city governments; individual patients and consumer groups; and, the Carpenters Trust of Western Washington (*the actual 100<sup>th</sup> participant in the Alliance*), and United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) / Teamsters Taft-Hartley Trust. Participants from the health industry include a large number of physician clinics, hospitals, health plans, pharmaceutical companies, and other health care organizations, as well as medical, hospital, health plan, and alternative medicine associations. (see [www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org/join/participants.html](http://www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org/join/participants.html))

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The Alliance is working to define, measure, report and reward high quality, efficient health care. Initiatives include:

- Publishing a **regional report comparing health care quality, cost and patient experience** at clinics and hospitals. The first public report will be available in 2007.
- Bringing together **physicians and other professionals to adopt treatment guidelines** for use by doctors across the five counties for more consistent, effective care. Focus areas are diabetes, heart disease, back pain, depression, and prescription drugs.
- **Developing materials for use by consumers, employers and others** to make informed health care decisions, including how to better manage and improve personal health.
- Identifying ways to **create incentives or break down barriers** in the system to improve the likelihood that the health care patients receive is effective and more affordable.
- Identifying and recommending ways to **reduce or eliminate duplication, inefficiency or processes that add more cost than value.**

The Puget Sound Health Alliance is a private, non-profit organization – a team effort of those who provide, pay for and use health care services, all working together to improve the quality of patient care for a healthier community, at a price more people can afford. Serving as a trusted source for information and public reporting that is grounded in research and reflects best practices, the Alliance helps people become smarter consumers of health care while encouraging everyone to take more control over improving personal health.

For more information, including a full list of Alliance participants and information on how to join, please contact us at 206.448.2570 or visit [www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org](http://www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org).

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