



**Aligning
Forces for
Quality**

A Robert Wood Johnson Foundation National Program

**Puget Sound
Health Alliance**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Network of Community-Based Programs to Improve Health Care Quality Expands

Ten New Communities Join The Puget Sound Health Alliance and Others in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Aligning Forces for Quality Program to Improve Care for People With Chronic Conditions

February 1, 2007 (Seattle, Wash.) – Ten communities across the country have been added to the *Aligning Forces for Quality, The Regional Market Project*, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

Like the Puget Sound Health Alliance, which is one of the four original groups selected into the program last summer, these additional communities will receive grants and support to help produce public reports on health care performance, engage consumers and create an infrastructure to improve the quality of health care provided to people with chronic conditions.

The ten new communities join the Puget Sound Health Alliance and programs in Detroit, Memphis, and Minneapolis/St. Paul. The original four were chosen as pilot projects for the *Aligning Forces for Quality* program in July of 2006. Together, the 14 sites are part of Robert Wood Johnson's three-year, \$14-million program.

"We are very pleased that more communities around the country have been selected to join this program that seeks to align the efforts of community leaders, consumers, doctors, nurses, employers and insurers in a collaborative effort to improve the care we provide for chronically-ill patients," said Margaret Stanley, Executive Director of the Puget Sound Health Alliance. "Together, this group of communities can help identify ways to drive ongoing quality improvement, learning from each others' successes, and incorporating best practices."

Through *Aligning Forces for Quality*, each grantee participates in the Foundation's work to ensure that all Americans, especially those with chronic conditions such as diabetes, depression, heart disease and asthma, receive high-quality health care. Americans get only half of the care recommended for their chronic conditions, according to studies the Foundation has commissioned.

"We want to help doctors, nurses and other health care providers work together to deliver better care, and educate patients and consumers to make better, more informed choices," said Patricia Powers, M.P.P.A., the president and chief executive officer of the Center for Health Improvement based in Sacramento, Calif., who directs *Aligning Forces for Quality*. "Market-based, regional collaboratives can help us achieve this; they represent a logical next step in the national drive to improve quality."

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Aligning Forces for Quality is designed to help communities-based collaborative organizations like the Puget Sound Health Alliance do three things to advance the quality of chronic care provided in doctors' offices, clinics and other outpatient settings: (1) help health care providers improve their own ability to deliver quality care; (2) help providers measure and publicly report their performance; and (3) help patients and consumers understand their role in demanding high-quality care.

RWJF conceived of *Aligning Forces for Quality* as an effort to help communities use multiple market forces to drive and sustain quality. The goal is to help local communities such as the Puget Sound retool their health care markets so that they can function as markets should. For the Puget Sound Health Alliance to improve the quality of care in Puget Sound, there needs to be participation on many fronts: 1) civic, business and health care leadership that is committed to quality care; 2) doctors, nurses and other providers who are committed to improving and who have the resources and capability to improve; 3) purchasers who are willing to reward high quality care; and 4) patients and consumers who receive accurate understandable information about the performance of providers and are motivated to act on that information when making health care decisions.

The original pilot grant recipients are:

- Puget Sound Health Alliance – Seattle, Wash.
- Greater Detroit Area Health Council – Detroit, Mich.
- Healthy Memphis Common Table – Memphis, Tenn.
- Minnesota Community Measurement – Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.

The additional grant recipients are:

- Alliance for Health – Grand Rapids, Mich.
- Community Health Alliance of Humboldt-Del Norte – Eureka, Calif.
- Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati – Cincinnati, Ohio
- Healthy York County Coalition – York, Pa.
- Kansas City Quality Improvement Consortium – Kansas City, Mo.
- Maine Quality Forum – Augusta, Maine
- MetroHealth System – Cleveland, Ohio
- Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation – Portland, Ore.
- P2 Collaborative of Western New York – Buffalo, N.Y.
- Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality – Madison, Wis.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 30 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

The Center for Health Improvement is a national, independent, nonprofit health policy center dedicated to improving population health and encouraging healthy behaviors. CHI uses evidence-based research as the basis for policy innovation and implementation. Since 1995, CHI has partnered with all levels of government, advocacy and community organizations, philanthropic foundations, and educators. For more information, visit www.forces4quality.org.