



Washington Academy of Family Physicians

May 24, 2006

Margaret Stanley, Executive Director
Puget Sound Health Alliance
2003 Western Avenue, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98121

Dear Ms. Stanley,

I am writing on behalf of the Washington Academy of Family Physicians to offer our support for efforts of the Puget Sound Health Alliance that are intended to improve the quality and value of healthcare with regard to pharmaceutical sampling, drug detailing, and use of proprietary drugs when an equally effective generic alternative is available.

The Washington Academy of Family Physicians, with nearly 3,000 members, is the largest constituent specialty society represented in the Washington State Medical Association. About half of our members practice in the five-county area covered by the Alliance.

At its May 10, 2006 meeting, the Board of Directors discussed the proposed recommendations that have emerged from the Alliance's Rx Clinical Improvement Team. The Board voted unanimously to support the recommendations that discourage the use of sampling and discourage pharmaceutical detailing in patient care locations. In addition, the Board also unanimously supported recommendations to encourage use of generic medications in the identified drug classes when use of such medications does not adversely impact the quality of care to individual patients.

This support is based in part on existing Washington Academy Family Physician policies that encourage use of evidence-based medicine, and discourage certain pharmaceutical company marketing practices. To our knowledge, there is no evidence that these practices improve patient care, and substantial evidence that they can be deleterious to the interests of our patients.

It may be of interest to note that at its Annual Meeting in May, the House of Delegates of the Washington Academy of Family Physicians voted to reduce the impact of pharmaceutical companies on its annual educational assembly by restricting its influence on educational presentations. This action was taken despite the potential adverse financial impact to the Academy and its members.

The Washington Academy of Family Physicians and its members have been actively engaged in the work of the Puget Sound Health Alliance. Our primary interest is to

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advocate for high quality care for our patients, and for the development of payment systems that reward rather than penalize family physicians who provide such care. We are hopeful that the collaborative work of the Alliance will contribute to the improvement of the health care system in the Puget Sound area, and that these improvements will diffuse throughout the state of Washington.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald N. Yorioka, MD".

Gerald N. Yorioka, MD
President