

Dear Community Member,

It's been an eventful month with significant progress made and some changes in our board of directors to report. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank the board members who have come to the end of their terms and are leaving the board. Darnell Dent of Community Health Plan of Washington, Sarah Patterson of Virginia Mason Medical Center, Dorothy Teeter of Public Health Seattle & King County and Annette King of Starbucks Coffee Company have all made significant contributions to our mission and have worked hard to get us where we are today. We appreciate all of their hard work and passion for what we are doing.

We are lucky to be joined by another set of talented leaders, and look forward to their direction. Welcome to our newest board members Kelley Hardin of Starbucks Coffee Company, John Fletcher of Providence Health System, and Milt Schwarz of Aetna. A very special welcome also goes out to our new board chair, David Fleming of Public Health – Seattle & King County, who has jumped in with both feet and who is already proving to be a great asset to our team. Although Ron Sims' term as chair is now at a close, I am very pleased to report that he remains an active member of the board.

Margaret Stanley

Progress At-A-Glance Thanks to the hard work of the Board, committees, workgroups and staff, the Alliance has made progress on many fronts, including:

- ✓ **Received and began combining data from all 15 health plans, self-insured employers and union trusts** that agreed to supply claims data for the first Alliance health care performance report. The data do not include any information identifying individual patients.
- ✓ **Finalized charters for two new clinical improvement teams** on prevention and asthma.
- ✓ **Cited as a central participant in state health care quality improvement efforts in SB5930**, the bill passed by the State Legislature to help implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care (see below for details).
- ✓ **Hosted Dr. Elliott Fisher as a keynote speaker at the March All Alliance meeting**, where he shared details on variations in care as reported in the Dartmouth Atlas and ideas about forming Accountable Care Organizations for quality improvement and pay-for-performance, and “shared savings” as an incentive for improvement.
- ✓ **Promoted the National Committee for Quality Assurance physician recognition programs** in presentations before the Medical Directors Council of Association of Washington Health Plans, the Washington State Collaborative and several area clinics.

- ✓ **Held a half-day workshop with Alliance Board members, the Consumer Engagement team, and other community representatives** to help develop consumer engagement strategies and focus areas.
- ✓ **Convened the workgroup on measuring patient satisfaction** to begin exploring possibilities for adding measures on patient satisfaction and experience to future performance reports.
- ✓ **Attended a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Consumer Engagement Learning Community meeting** in Memphis to exchange strategies with other pilot communities in the Aligning Forces for Quality project.

Welcome to the Alliance!

Since our last Update to you, several others have joined the Alliance: Alicia Caswell, Denise Hess, Jorge Gonzales, MultiCare Medical Group, Pro-Scribe, and Women to Women OB-GYN. Welcome everyone!

Opportunities and Upcoming Events

Protecting Prescribing Data — Calling all clinicians: Did you know that the American Medical Association makes it possible for you to opt out of the databases that pharmaceutical sales representatives use to track providers' prescribing practices? The AMA does not collect prescribing data, but health information organizations use the AMA's Physician Masterfile to match providers with prescription data from other sources. In response to concerns about these practices, the AMA allows physicians to opt out of having their Masterfile information released for sales purposes. To learn more or opt out, go to the AMA's [Physician Data Restriction Program](#) online.

Save The Date: Health Care Benefit Design Strategies — On May 24th, join other benefits managers, HR leaders, wellness program leaders, and employer and other purchaser representatives at this important, hands-on learning session. Dr. Tom Parry, President of the Integrated Benefits Institute, will present insightful research and practical approaches to getting leadership buy-in to benefit design that promotes high quality, effective health care for employees and their families. Come hear Martha Fuller, CFO of the SEAHAWKS, on what matters most to senior executives. The attendance fee is waived for Alliance participants. All others are asked to contribute \$25 to the Alliance, collected at the door (make checks out to the Puget Sound Health Alliance). The event will be held at the Washington Athletic Club in Seattle. Come at 7:00 for networking and breakfast; speakers will begin at 7:30 and end no later than 9:15 a.m. For more information, contact Sean McCliment at sean@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org.

Recognition for Value-Driven Health Care Leaders – U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt will recognize health care purchasers and providers, community organizations, and local, state and federal organizations for supporting the movement for value-driven health care in an event on May 9 in Washington, DC. Secretary Leavitt came to Seattle in January to name the Alliance the first organization in the nation to be recognized as a community leader for value-driven health care. This is a prerequisite for obtaining Medicare data for use in public reporting of health care performance. For details on the upcoming event, visit the [Value-Driven](#) website.

Exciting Job Opportunities

Alliance Health Information Specialist — The Alliance has an opening for a health information specialist who will serve as the principal support staff for project management and analysis related to the shared reporting initiative. The Health Information Specialist reports to the Alliance's Director of Health Information. Duties involve project management, in addition to working closely with data aggregation vendors, analytic consultants, and key representatives of organizations involved in the Alliance. See Job Description
<http://www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org/about/documents/HISpecialistjobdescripti on-April2007.pdf>.

Opportunity With King County — King County has an opening for a Senior Health and Benefits Planner. This position is part of the core team that is guiding King County's innovative Health Reform Initiative. It offers an excellent opportunity for a person who has managerial experience in benefits administration to transition into a role on a strategic planning team. For details, go to the [County's website](#).

Other Health News

State Lawmakers Support Quality Initiatives — The Washington State Legislature passed SB5930, which contains provisions related to the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care. Several of the sections of the bill will bolster the work of the Alliance. Among other things, the bill calls for the Health Care Authority to develop a five-year plan, in collaboration with others including the Alliance, to reward health care providers for care that reflects evidence-based standards and patient preferences. The bill also establishes the Washington State Quality Forum to work with the Alliance and other organizations to track and disseminate health care quality and cost information statewide.

King County Diabetes Rates Double in the Last Decade — **Some** 84,000 adults in King County were diagnosed with diabetes in 2006. That's nearly 6 percent of the adult population, and more than twice the rate in 1996. Health officials attribute the rise to increased rates of obesity, which is a contributor to Type 2 Diabetes, the more common form. Type 1 Diabetes also is on the rise.
[Diabetes Rate Doubles](#), Seattle Post-Intelligencer, May 1, 2007

[Diabetes Rate Soars](#), Seattle Times, May 1, 2007

If you have suggestions about the content of this Update or would like to submit news to possibly include in future Updates, contact Diane Giese at (206) 448-2570 ext 117 or diane@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org.