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## Update to the Community

October 2008

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### Dear Community Member,

*We are making good progress on the next Community Checkup, which is on track for public release next month. Medical groups have been reviewing their draft results and have provided feedback that helped improve our methods for attributing care to particular clinic locations and providers. We're now working to resolve any remaining questions before sending a private, advance version of the final results to the medical groups.*

*We continue to receive very positive reviews of our new Community Checkup website ([www.wacommunitycheckup.org](http://www.wacommunitycheckup.org)), which enables individuals across the region to make better use of the report by sorting the results based on their health needs, interest areas or location. The website also offers a much easier way to sort and get right to the most useful tools and information for patients, employers, doctors and others.*

*In these challenging economic times, our collaborative work to advance transparency, value and consumerism in health care is more critical than ever. Building on our foundation of reports on evidence-based medicine, we are taking the next step to make information on resource use and cost a part of the healthcare decision-making process for everyone.*

*I hope you will consider joining the Alliance as we continue with this important work to improve health care quality and affordability for everyone in the region. To learn more about participating in the Alliance, see [www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org/join/index.html](http://www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org/join/index.html).*

*Regards,*

*Mary McWilliams*  
Executive Director

## Progress At-A-Glance

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Thanks to the hard work of the Board, committees, workgroups, volunteers and staff, the Alliance continues to make progress, including:

- **Completed medical groups' review of draft results for the 2nd Community Checkup report**, via our private, secure web portal. We are also wrapping up the work with data suppliers and volunteer clinics to review the process linking patients to particular physicians or clinics.
- **Updated results for measures of hospital care** on the [Community Checkup website](#). Areas of care include heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, and surgical care. The updated results reflect care delivered between January and December 2007. Stay tuned, as more hospital measures will be added soon.
- **Collaborated with national and local quality and performance measurement experts** on strategies to improve health care quality and increase transparency through public reporting at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's Chartered Value Exchange (CVE) Learning Network meeting in Washington, DC. The Alliance is one of 24 select organizations around the country that have been designated as CVEs.
- **Hosted Alliance purchasers for an introduction to Carol, Inc.** ([www.carol.com](http://www.carol.com)), an online service recently launched in the Puget Sound area that enables consumers to compare and purchase packages of health care services, as a possible payment reform pilot for 2009.
- **Joined an Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) collaboration to reduce hospital readmissions in Washington State.** Other collaborative members include the Washington State Hospital Association, the WA State Health Care Authority, Qualis Health, and the nursing home and home health associations.
- **Began planning for a second round of participation in eValue8**, a collaborative process among health care purchasers and health plans to foster accountability and improvement in health plan function.
- **Hosted an All Alliance meeting featuring David Lansky, President and CEO of the Pacific Business Group on Health.** The Pacific Business Group on Health is one of the oldest and largest business coalitions in the country focused on improving quality and effectiveness of health care while moderating costs.
- **Extended the Prescription for Health Information pilot program** for three months in Thurston County, due to ongoing interest from participating libraries and clinics. The pilot supports clinicians in encouraging patients to learn more about their health conditions by highlighting resources available at local libraries.
- **Hosted a community workshop featuring Cheri Lattimer, Project Director of the National Transitions of Care Coalition.** The Quality Improvement Committee was joined by approximately 30 attendees for this workshop.

**Want to find out more?** *Keep reading!*

## Welcome to the Alliance!

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The Alliance now has 169 participating organizations and 60 individual participants. The following organizations and individuals have joined since the last Update:

- Enumclaw Wellness Center
- Jesse Consulting
- Dwayne Eriksen
- Dorothy Graham
- Thomas Reuter

## Upcoming Events and Opportunities

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**American Diabetes Association -- Winning at Work: Financial Strategies to Wellness** -- Join distinguished civic, business and health care leaders to discuss financial strategies to help your company on its journey to wellness. Learn how to reduce the financial impact of diabetes on your company's bottom line. Meet the ADA's 2009 Workplace Health Partners. Sign up for a free worksite wellness event with the ADA. *Please note that attendance is limited to two people per employer.* Breakfast will be served.

**Date:** October 15

**Time:** 7 a.m. - 10 a.m.

**Location:** The Bellevue Club, 1200 SE Sixth St., Bellevue

RSVP to 206-282-4616 ext. 7216 or [cwalker@diabetes.org](mailto:cwalker@diabetes.org)

**Medical Home Pilot Grants -- Qualis Health has received a grant from the Commonwealth Fund for a 5-year demonstration project to transform safety-net clinics into patient-centered medical homes.** Qualis, in partnership with the MacColl Institute for Healthcare Innovation, will select and support four organizations to serve as "Regional Coordinating Centers" to implement the program among participating clinics. Grantee organizations will receive financial support and technical assistance. Applications are due November 3. For details, contact Kathryn Phillips, MPH, Project Manager, Medical Home Initiative, at: [kathrynp@qualishealth.org](mailto:kathrynp@qualishealth.org) or 206-364-9700 ext 2007, or go to <http://www.qhmedicalhome.org/safety-net/index.cfm>.

**Value-Based Benefit Design Webinar--Featured speaker Mark Fendrick, MD of the University of Michigan Center for Value Based Insurance Design, will discuss VBBD concepts, examples in the workplace and the latest VBBD findings.** The webinar will take place on Tuesday, November 18th from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm PST. To register, go to <http://mail.benfield.com/forms/webinar/webinar.html>. This program is hosted by the Oregon Coalition of Health Care Purchasers and supported by sanofi-aventis.

**News of Note**

**\$1 Million Awarded to Clinics and Hospitals for Health Information Technology Grants**

Drawing from a pool of \$1,000,000 for 2008, the Washington Health Information Collaborative (WHIC) has awarded grants up to \$20,000 each to medical groups, clinics and hospitals for the acquisition, implementation and expansion of health information technology to improve patient care. This year's grant recipients were announced October 7, 2008. For more information, including a list of 2008 WHIC award recipients, go to [www.wahealthinfocollaborative.org](http://www.wahealthinfocollaborative.org).

WHIC is a joint effort of First Choice Health, the Washington State Health Care Authority, Qualis Health and the Puget Sound Health Alliance, who have joined forces to offer financial incentives through grants, plus consulting support, to clinics and hospitals to adopt and expand the use of health information technology (IT).

**myRegence.com Earns Best Health Care Industry Website Award**

Earlier this month, Alliance member Regence BlueShield's website was named Outstanding Web site in the Health Care Industry division of the Web Marketing Association Web Awards. Among other things, myRegence.com features interactive tools to research treatment options, cost-quality comparisons of hospitals, wellness programs and activities and incentives for making healthy lifestyle choices. Judges credited the site for its layout, content and design.

**Medicare to Stop Paying for Errors**

If an auto mechanic accidentally broke your windshield while trying to repair the engine, he would never get away with billing you for fixing his mistake. Today, Medicare will start applying that logic to U.S. medicine on a broad scale when it stops paying hospitals for the added cost of treating patients who are injured in their care. *The Seattle Times*, October 1, 2008 [Read more](#)

**Study: Never events major factor in hospital liability costs**

Hospital-acquired conditions accounted for 12.2 percent of total legal liability costs insured by healthcare facilities in 2007, according to new research by insurance firm Aon Corp. *Fierce Healthcare*, October 1, 2008 [Read more](#)

**Suggestions or Comments about this Update?**

Email: [diane@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org](mailto:diane@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org)

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