
Update to the Community

April 2009

In this issue

- Progress At-A-Glance
- Alliance Seeking Public Comment on "Rules of Use" Document
- Local Hospitals Chosen for National Quality Collaborative
- Alliance Part of National Coalition Pushing for Federal Health Reform
- Alliance in the Wall Street Journal
- Alliance Work Presented at Puget Sound American Marketing Association
- Upcoming Events
- Other Opportunities

Dear Community Member

This month we will welcome seven new Directors to our Board: Cathie Furman, R.N. (Virginia Mason), Marilyn Guthrie (REI), Tom Hunt (Puget Sound Energy), Peter McGough, M.D. (UW Medicine), Jim Messina (Premera), Roger Neumaier (Snohomish County), and Dorothy Teeter (King County). We are fortunate to have 22 board members active and engaged in our work. The fact is, our organization's effectiveness relies on the caliber of individuals and organizations around the table who share a commitment to improving health and health care in this region. I also want to recognize our retiring Directors: Ron Sims (King County), Audrey Halvorson (Premera), Jerry Henry (Puget Sound Energy), Kelley Hardin (Starbucks), Ze'ev Young, M.D. (First Choice Health), Mike Cochran (Washington Mutual) and John Fletcher (Providence). Some were founding board members and we're grateful to each for their exceptional guidance and dedication.

I also want to call your attention to a key policy decision that the Board is considering, and that's the "Rules of Use" for the ambulatory quality measures in the Community Checkup report. Concurrent with the release of the next Community Checkup this summer, the Alliance will implement any board-directed changes in how the report may be used. You can submit written comments to the Alliance by April 13. You can find more detail about the revisions and how to submit your comments below, or on our [website](#).

Regards,

Mary McWilliams
Alliance Executive Director

Progress At-A-Glance

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

- **Revised "Rules of Use" document based on input from the previous Board meeting.** The revisions include less restrictive rules as well as broader distribution of individual practitioner-level results to data suppliers. Public comments are now being accepted via the Alliance [website](#). Read on for more information.

- **Nearing completion of new report comparing care provided to people on Medicaid versus people covered under other types of insurance.** The report is scheduled for release in April.
- **Revised the Alliance public policy guidelines.** The changes reflect enlarging the scope of our advocacy to reflect the full value equation (quality and cost), other initiatives in our strategic plan and relevant federal health reform issues.
- **Supported SB 5892 to maximize appropriate prescription drug use in a cost-effective manner.** The bill helps to ensure that State health care programs purchase high quality, cost-effective care based on the best available science. You can read more about the Alliance's public policy position on our [website](#).

Want to find out more? *Keep reading!*

Alliance Seeking Public Comment on "Rules of Use" Document

~~~~~

The Alliance is re-examining the "Rules of Use" policies for the Community Checkup report results. The restrictions on business use of public reports may be loosened. Based on the Board's policy decision to re-examine restrictions after the first two reports were released. This means that under certain conditions, the results in the reports may be used for business purposes, such as marketing and benefit planning, and to raise the bar for quality community-wide. Given the importance of these decisions, the Alliance is soliciting public comment and input to be received by **Monday, April 13**. To learn more about the specific proposals and learn how to provide your comments, please visit our [website](#).

### **Local Hospitals Chosen for National Quality Collaborative**

~~~~~

Tacoma General Hospital of the MultiCare Health System and St. Francis Hospital of the Franciscan Health System have been selected by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as two of 16 hospitals across the U.S. to participate in the Aligning Forces for Quality: Transforming Care at the Bedside Collaborative (TCAB) collaborative. This new quality improvement collaborative engages nurses and frontline staff to improve the quality and safety of patient care on medical and surgical units. The Puget Sound Health Alliance is the local coordinating contact for the Foundation in these efforts. We will work with the hospitals to benchmark their successes and help spread lessons learned and other insights about the new quality improvement innovations across this region.

Alliance Part of National Coalition Pushing for Federal Health Reform

~~~~~

The Puget Sound Health Alliance is part of a new nation-wide public-private coalition, Stand for Quality, which joined together with a shared belief that improvements in access, quality, and affordability are inextricably linked. The coalition of national and regional groups of doctors and hospitals, employers, patient groups and others recognizes that simply having health insurance does not ensure that patients can access affordable care that is safe, efficient and responsive to their needs. For more about the specific recommended framework for federal health care reform and the 165 private and public members of Stand for Quality, go to [www.standforquality.org](http://www.standforquality.org).

### **Alliance in the Wall Street Journal**

~~~~~

Last month, the Alliance was interviewed for an article in the Wall Street Journal, "Finding a Way to Ask Doctors Tough Questions", on advocacy efforts to empower patients. As a grantee of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, who provides grants for

programs designed to get consumers to take an active role in their own care, the Alliance was highlighted as a forward thinking organization in this area for its work in creating a user friendly public website and patient-physician checklists to be used at health care appointments. [Click here](#) to read the full article.

Alliance Work Presented at Puget Sound American Marketing Association

As part of ongoing work to raise awareness of the Alliance and research on how to effectively communicate about "quality care" to consumers and to providers, Diane Giese, Communications and Development Director for the Alliance presented to the Health Care Special Interest Group of the Puget Sound American Marketing Association. About 85 health care professionals from the region who focus on strategic communication and marketing attended, representing organizations including American Heart Association, Community Health Plan, Evergreen Healthcare, Group Health, HealthPoint, Overlake Hospital, Peace Health, Philips Healthcare, Premera Blue Cross, Providence Health & Services, Qualis Health, Regence, Seattle Children's, Valley Medical Center, Virginia Mason Medical Center.

Upcoming Events

Workflow Strategies for Using Your EMR to Improve Care (April 14)

Qualis Health is presenting a free teleconference on Using Clinic Protocols and EMR Tools to Integrate Evidence-Based Care Guidelines into Practice on April 14, 2009 from 11:30am-12:30pm Pacific Time. The session will feature community-based programs that have implemented care management strategies using evidence-based guidelines to improve colorectal cancer screening rates. While the discussion will center on different care management approaches for the topic of colorectal cancer screening, the key learning principles (such as developing care plans, monitoring follow-up, and assessing progress) are transferable to patient care in other clinical conditions. For more information or to register for this session, please go to the registration [website](#).

Aligning Forces for Quality National Meeting (May 13-15)

This year, the Aligning Forces for Quality National Meeting will take place from May 13-15 in Chicago, Illinois. The agenda will include items focused on consumer engagement, organizational models of sustainability, performance measurement in reporting, transparency efforts and leadership development with time for special workshops and networking. Several Alliance Board Members will be attending to learn and connect with organizations across the country that are working toward similar goals. For more information please contact Diane Giese, diane@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org.

Northwest Patient Safety Conference (June 4) The 2009 Northwest Patient Safety Conference will be held on June 4 in Seattle, WA. This sixth regional conference focuses on keeping patients safe throughout their journey of care from home through outpatient, inpatient, and continuing care settings. The conference is organized around the themes of communication, medication safety, preventing infection, and safe procedural care. Presentations and small-group discussions in workshop formats provide a full-day event that will challenge participants' assumptions about best practices, and provide tools and methods that can be quickly put to use in participants' care settings. For more information, please visit www.wapatientssafety.org.

Healthcare Unbound Conference: E-Health and Other Innovative Applications in Health Care to Manage Disease and Promote Wellness (June 22-23)

The Sixth Annual Healthcare Unbound Conference & Exhibition will take place on June 22-23 in Seattle, WA. Come to the nationally recognized conference and exhibition, conducted annually by the Center for Business Innovation. This year the focus is innovative applications of remote monitoring, home telehealth and e-health to manage diseases and to promote wellness. Key topics of this year's event include: 1) government initiatives, including the economic stimulus bill and regulatory changes, and their impact on the market, 2) the patient centered medical home, 3) innovations in aging-in-place technologies, 4) the evolving role of wireless technologies, and 5) how the convergence of consumer and healthcare technologies will improve health outcomes and reduce costs. *Note: Alliance participants get a \$100 discount off the registration fee.* For more information, please visit www.tcbi.org.

NBCH National Conference: Improving Health, Reforming Health Care (November 8-10)

The NBCH National Conference is set for November 8-10 in Scottsdale, Arizona. The 2009 Annual Conference will convene nearly 500 health care leaders to focus on the overarching and interconnected imperatives to transform health care. The gathering is two days of in- depth training, networking, and product demonstrations with health care's largest employer customers. Meet with peers and experts alike, in a unique opportunity to discuss health care issues and insights as NBCH presents Improving Health, Reforming Health Care: An Employer Call to Action. For more information and to register, go to www.nbch.org/events/conference.cfm.

Other Opportunities

~~~~~  
**Medical Home Collaborative Enrollment Opens**

Open enrollment for the Washington State Medical Home -Improving Performance in Practice Collaborative offered jointly by the Washington State Department of Health and the Washington Academy of Family Physicians has now begun. A patient-centered medical home delivers primary care to patients of all ages and allows time for a strong, trusting relationship to develop between the physician or primary care provider, the care team, the patient and his or her family. Enrollment will continue from **March 31 until May 29 2009** but early enrollment is encouraged. Family medicine, internal medicine, geriatric and pediatric practices are encouraged to apply. For more information, please contact Faith Johnson, [faith.johnson@doh.wa.gov](mailto:faith.johnson@doh.wa.gov).

**Suggestions or Comments about this Update?**

~~~~~  
Email: diane@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org
Contact Us Form: <http://www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org/contact.cfm>
~~~~~