
Update to the Community

March 2009

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Dear Community Member,

This month marks an important leadership transition for the Alliance as King County Executive Ron Sims retires from the Alliance Board and prepares to head to D.C. to become Deputy Secretary of HUD. Ron's role with the Alliance has been pivotal, from his mobilization of the King County Task Force which conceived of the Alliance, to his personal recruitment of many of the organizations that constitute this multi-stakeholder coalition, and his chairmanship of the Board in its early years. He's been the model of the impact a leader can have on the culture of health for his workforce, and he's made the Alliance work integral to the benefits plan of King County. Ron has gone to school on health care and earned the respect of those in the field locally and nationally for his grasp of its complexity and need for change. Ron has been that change agent here, and he'll do the same in the other Washington. We will miss him, but we're confident that the foundation he built is firm for the future.

And that leads to an important point. Each of you reading this Update can support our work, as Ron has. You can serve as a participant, write a check to support the Alliance or help distribute our materials and let others know about the work we are doing. Especially in this environment, when time, money, and other resources are constrained, the Board and staff of the Alliance are most appreciative of your commitment.

Please consider joining the Alliance as we continue with this important work to improve health care quality and affordability for everyone in the region. Visit our [website](#) to learn more.

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:

- **Recommended changes to current restrictions on how the public data in the Community Checkup Report can be used.** Several multi-stakeholder

committees of the Alliance discussed the benefits and challenges of these changes and provided recommendations to the Board. The Alliance will be asking for public input for the Board to consider when they make a decision in April.

- **Convened stakeholders to gather input on how to present results when comparing health care performance for people covered by Medicaid vs. commercial insurance.** Alliance staff will soon circulate a draft of the report for final comments. Release of the report is scheduled for mid-March.
- **Unveiled a new service to help organizations communicate about improving health and health care.** The Alliance published the first of a new monthly column on timely and relevant health topics for use in communications materials and by media. We encourage organizations to use and link to these columns and other resources in their regular communications or newsletters to employees, patients and other individuals.
- **Updated medical group results for the 2009 Community Checkup Report.** The Alliance is working with each data supplier to compare these results with internally generated ones and address any identified concerns or discrepancies. The Alliance also decided to expand the number of clinic locations in the report to include those with at least four clinicians who treat a minimum number of patients.

Want to find out more? *Keep reading!*

New Resources for You: Communications Materials on Health Topics

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The Alliance has introduced a new service to help your organization easily distribute understandable health information to employees, patients, customers and members.

Each month, the Alliance will publish a monthly column by Dr. Lori Whittaker that you are welcome to use. Resources include a 500-word column, a shorter version and photos of Dr. Whittaker for online and print media. We will add short videos of Dr. Whittaker talking about each topic, and videos of consumers talking about the topic from their perspective.

The columns give practical advice for individuals, whether they are young or old, healthy or managing a chronic condition, and point them to resources and information they can use to get more involved in their own health and health care. [Click here](#) to see all the information and resources currently available on our website. Check back, as more will be added over time.

### **News of Note: King County Executive Ron Sims Named Hero of Health Care**

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Washington state has long ranked among the nation's leaders when it comes to state-of-the-art health care. But there are some dedicated professionals helping to make this state a unique place for the health care industry and life sciences. For its first annual Leaders in Health Care awards, Seattle Business Monthly recognized King County Executive Ron Sims for its Employer Achievement in Health Care award. Congratulations Executive Sims!

Alliance in the News: Alliance Sets Example as Innovator

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The Puget Sound Health Alliance was noted as setting an "outstanding example" of health care innovation in an editorial published by the Everett Herald. The editorial

observes that the real power behind the Alliance is a commitment by all involved to make the overall health-care system better. [Click here](#) to read the full text of the editorial.

### **Fight Back, Go Red for Women**

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In the whirl of errands and family obligations, not to mention holding down a job, it is easy for each of us to get out of touch with our feelings, our perception of ourselves and miss even obvious signs that our hearts may be at risk. Go Red For Women is a movement passionately dedicated to helping women fight back against heart disease, the No. 1 killer of women in America.

We encourage you to take the first step toward safeguarding your heart health and [join](#) Go Red For Women today! Your participation is free and includes a monthly e-newsletter filled with heart-healthy tips, plus invitations to events in your area. Help the American Heart Association reach its goal of reducing coronary heart disease and stroke risk by 25% by the year 2010 by sharing this life-saving information with the women in your life.

Upcoming Events

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#### **Transforming Health Care: Creating a Culture of Value**

For years, Virginia Mason Medical Center has worked with great success to internally reduce cost while improving quality and safety. However, the current payment system is a barrier to passing on savings while remaining solvent. Join in a discussion of the problem, potential solutions and how your organization can participate in this crucial shared commitment to change. This event, offered by Virginia Mason's Center for Health Care Solutions, will be held Tuesday, March 24th from 7:00-11am at the Fairmont Olympic Hotel in Seattle. For more information and to RSVP by March 20, go to [www.vmworks.org/events/resForm.php](http://www.vmworks.org/events/resForm.php)

#### **National Business Coalition on Health 14th Annual Conference**

Join the National Business Coalition on Health (NBCH) and its coalition employer members at the health care buyer's premier conference-two days of in-depth training, networking and product demonstrations with health care's largest employer customers. Meet with peers and experts alike, capitalizing on this unique opportunity to discuss health care issues and insights as NBCH presents *Improving Health, Reforming Health Care: An Employer Call to Action*. The 2009 Annual Conference will convene nearly 500 health care leaders in Scottsdale, Arizona, November 8-10, to focus on the overarching and interconnected imperatives of health and health care transformation. Please visit [www.nbch.org](http://www.nbch.org) for more information.

### **Suggestions or Comments about this Update?**

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Email: diane@pugetsoundhealthalliance.org

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

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