
Update to the Community

October 2009

In this issue

- Progress At-A-Glance
- 2010 Community Checkup Report - Data Submission
- WA Health Information Collaborative Distributes More Grants
- Study: Health-care rates to rise 6% in 2010
- Alliance Members Receive Funding for Comparative-Effectiveness Research in Cancer
- Federal Funds for EHR-related Technical Assistance to Health Care Organizations
- Upcoming Events

Dear Community Member

I want to alert you to new information that will be included on the Community Checkup website later this month that considers aspects of health plan performance. The content is based upon information reported by health plans and then scored against criteria that are included in the *eValue8* tool. Developed by the National Business Coalition on Health, *eValue8* is the leading evidence-based tool used by coalitions, their purchaser members, and national employers to measure the relative performance of health plans (HMOs and PPOs) within their market and benchmark performance to best scores nationally.

The tool focuses on critical quality-related activities such as consumer engagement, provider performance, pharmacy management, prevention and chronic disease management. We recognize that there is more to high quality health plan services and programs than what is measured by *eValue8*, especially early on, as health plans are adjusting to meeting best practices based on national standards. However, the Alliance believes that *eValue8* is the best approach to create a baseline for consistently assessing health plan performance and improvement over time.

This report builds on the foundation to improve the local health care system by adding health plan results to the clinic and hospital measures already in the Community Checkup report. You will soon be able to look up these results on www.WACommunityCheckup.org alongside all the other useful information on quality care in our community.

Like medical groups and hospitals, health plans have a very important role in shaping and helping to ensure that the health care people receive is effective, safe and affordable. We applaud all of the organizations who took part in the *eValue8* program in 2009 as leaders committed to improving the quality and value of local health care. We look forward to conducting the *eValue8* process again in 2010 in the Puget Sound market and continuing to have this type of health plan performance information available on our Community Checkup 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:

- **Beginning data submissions for the 2010 Community Checkup Report.** The next report on medical group measures is scheduled to be released next spring.
- **Finalizing the health plan report.** Results will be available on the [www.WACommunityCheckup.org](http://www.WACommunityCheckup.org) website later this month.
- **Distributing the next round of grants to providers to improve information technology through the Washington Health Information Collaborative.** The health information technology awards are intended to improve health care safety, quality and cost.

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

## 2010 Community Checkup Report - Data Submission

~~~~~  
The 18 health plans, self-insured employers, and union trusts who supply data for the Alliance's Community Checkup report will be submitting their data to Milliman this month in preparation for the next release of the Alliance's Community Checkup medical group measures, scheduled for Spring 2010.

WA Health Information Collaborative Distributes More Grants

~~~~~  
The Washington Health Information Collaborative (WHIC), comprised of First Choice Health, the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA), the Puget Sound Health Alliance and Qualis Health selected an additional set of health care providers throughout Washington, Alaska, Idaho and Oregon to receive up to \$20,000 to improve health care for their patients through information technology.

The health information technology awards are intended to improve health care safety, quality and cost by enabling physicians and other practitioners to instantly and securely access accurate individual patient medical records, in addition to looking at aggregated data among all their patients for improved decision-making. As health care quality comparison reports become more common, physicians and hospitals are adopting technology to help them more consistently provide care that is effective in keeping their patients as healthy as possible. For more information visit [www.wahealthinfocollaborative.org](http://www.wahealthinfocollaborative.org).

## Study: Health-care rates to rise 6% in 2010

~~~~~  
Health-care rates are projected to increase about 6 percent for employers in 2010, according to an analysis by Hewitt Associates. In 2009, average health-care premiums also increased 6 percent, consistent with 2008. Click [here](#) to read the full article.

Alliance Members Receive Funding for Comparative-Effectiveness Research in Cancer

~~~~~

Researchers at Group Health Research Institute and the University of Washington School of Public Health and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, have been selected to lead four projects backed by approximately \$16 million in federal stimulus funding for comparative-effectiveness research in cancer. The grants establish Seattle as a national hub for conducting such research, which aims to objectively analyze cancer diagnostic tools, screening tests and treatments to determine the optimal combination of effectiveness and cost. Congratulations to the organizations who received funding for this important work.

## Federal Funds for EHR-related Technical Assistance to Health Care Organizations

~~~~~

Healthcare providers are expected to achieve "meaningful use" of electronic health record systems (EHRs) by the year 2015 or be subject to financial penalties under Medicare. A new federally funded program has been established to provide EHR-related technical assistance to targeted healthcare organizations.

The DHHS' [Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology](#) (ONC) has solicited applications for [Health Information Technology Extension Program](#) "Regional Extension Centers" (RECs) to provide the technical assistance in specific areas across the country. [Qualis Health](#), an independent, nonprofit organization that provides healthcare quality improvement and care management services - is applying to become a REC in Idaho and Washington.

The Alliance encourages all providers to contemplate your EMR needs then fax your requested information to Qualis (fax:206-366-3370). For a form to submit this information, click [here](#).

Upcoming Events

Association of WA Cities Healthy Worksite Summit - October 7-8, 2009

~~~~~

The mission of the Healthy Worksite Summit is to provide training and networking opportunities for promoting worksite health in Washington State. The Summit supports anyone interested in designing, promoting and implementing strategies to promote worksite health. Participants represent both large and small organizations from the public and private sectors. The Summit is designed for those representing health promotion, employee benefits and injury prevention. For more information go to: <http://www.awcnet.org/worksitesummit/index.htm>

### H1N1 Informational Conference Calls - October 8- 9, 2009

In an effort to give you the most up to date information about the H1N1 virus, the White House Office of Public Engagement, in coordination with the Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will hold informational conference calls on this subject. Below is a list of conference call information pertaining to different communities. Please feel free to join any number of these calls. Topics will include prevention, the importance of vaccination, vaccine safety and availability. \*Provide briefing title in lieu of passcode.

THURSDAY, October 8

- 11:00a EDT Title: Maternal Health H1N1 Call. Participant: (800) 553- 0327
- 1:00p EDT Title: H1N1 Briefing Call. Participant: (800) 230-1085
- 1:45p EDT Title: Children H1N1 Call. Participant: (800) 288-8961
- 2:00p EDT Title: Cancer H1N1 Call. Participant: (800) 230- 1096
- 2:00p EDT Title: African American H1N1 Call. Participant: (800) 288- 8960
- 7:00p EDT Title: Pacific Islanders H1N1 Call. Participant: (800) 230- 1059

FRIDAY, October 9

- 11:00a EDT Title: Cardiovascular H1N1 Call. Participant: (800) 230-1951
- 12:00p EDT Title: Cardiovascular H1N1 Call. Participant: (800) 230-1951
- 1:00p EDT Title: Diabetes H1N1 Call. Participant: (800) 230-1085
- 1:00p EDT Title: Asthma H1N1 Call. Participant: (800) 230-1074
- 2:00p EDT Title: Disabilities H1N1 Call. Participant: (800) 230-1951
- 2:00p EDT Title: Immigrants\Non English Speaking H1N1 Call. Participant: (800) 230-1096

#### **Transforming Health Care - October 13, 2009**

Please join Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon, Mary McWilliams, Executive Director, Puget Sound Health Alliance and distinguished members of the medical professional and business community in a dialogue of how health care is being transformed right here, right now in the Puget Sound. There is no cost to attend. For more information and an agenda, please contact Ryan Hembree at [ryan.hembree@snoco.org](mailto:ryan.hembree@snoco.org)

#### **Transforming Healthcare through Health IT Summit - November 4-5, 2009**

The Transforming Healthcare through Health IT Summit is designed to help top-level executives, legislators, physicians, regulators, and technologists come to grips with the swirling forces of health information technology change, policy development, and changing business models. Participants include CEO's, CIO's, CMIO's, VP's, Directors, etc. from rural hospital, health systems, single facility hospitals, IDNS, and other health care providers. For more information visit <http://ihealthtran.com/fallccs.html>

#### **Improving Health, Reforming Health Care: An Employer Call to Action - November 8-10, 2009**

Attention, health care stakeholders! 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, & 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. More information at: <http://www.nbch.org/events/conference.cfm>

**American Diabetes Association: Winning at Work - November 18, 2009**

Join the ADA and distinguished guests for an informative and interactive discussion on wellness in the workplace. Access free resources from the ADA, sponsors and health partners. Learn how to detect, prevent and manage diabetes in the workplace. Gain new insights from experts in health promotion and wellness. For more information, contact Lisa Kuhnau at 206-282-4616 ext. 7216 or [lkuhnau@diabetes.org](mailto:lkuhnau@diabetes.org)

**Suggestions or Comments about this Update?**

-----

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

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

-----