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## Update to the Community

September 2009

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### Dear Community Member

The Alliance Board has just completed a process to articulate the value of the Alliance and see how that translates into the business model we use to generate funds for this work. Interviews with representative stakeholders and subsequent Board discussions acknowledged the Alliance as the one leadership forum where purchasers, providers, health plans and patients meet directly to improve the value - both quality and cost - of health care. The Alliance Board reaffirmed the existing business model of largely dues-based support from participating organizations and individuals and committed to growing the membership further.

Recognizing that there has not been an increase in participation fees since the Alliance's inception in 2004, the Board found a strong rationale to request one in 2010. However, the Board is also keenly aware of challenges that its participants face in this current economic downturn. For that reason, we opted to defer an increase in 2010 and to instead plan for a ten percent increase in 2011. All participants will receive a letter detailing this plan. The intent of this decision is to retain and, in fact, grow our participant base in 2010 and to provide member organizations with ample time to plan for the increase in their budgeting cycle.

This is an auspicious time for the Puget Sound Health Alliance. We have just released the Community Checkup report for the third time and we're embarking on a pilot with the State of Washington to bring together multiple payers and select medical groups and purchasers to develop an innovative, common payment structure to support the medical home model of care. Moreover, the Alliance's work on performance measurement, public reporting, and payment reform coincides nicely with various federal health reform proposals, and we're considered a national model for these proposals. The Alliance could not have achieved any of this without you, and we appreciate your continued support.

Regards,

*Mary McWilliams*  
Alliance 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:

- **Beginning data testing for the 2010 Community Checkup Report.** The next report is scheduled to be released next spring.
- **Compiled performance measurement results for use in new resource use reports.** Alliance staff are currently finalizing text for these reports and from public sources for release later this year.
- **Gaining attention at the national level in a number of presentations by Alliance staff.**
- **Supporting the Healthiest State in the Nation campaign to engage employees in healthy behaviors at work and at home.**

Want to find out more? *Keep reading!*

### **Work underway on the 2010 Community Checkup Report**

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Work on the 2010 Community Checkup report is now underway. Data suppliers have submitted test files for review which helps identify potential issues before data submission in October. The next Community Checkup report is scheduled to be released in spring 2010.

### **Alliance Applying for Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Development Fund**

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The Alliance submitted two proposals to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Development Fund in accordance with direction and input from members and the Alliance Board. One proposal focused on payment reform to help fund a medical home project and one proposal focused on health information technology to explore methods for including clinical data in our multi-payer dataset.

### **New Resource Use Reports Coming Soon**

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The Resource Measurement Work Group (RMWG) recently compiled performance measurement results published by reputable third parties including: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Dartmouth Atlas researchers, and our Washington State Department of Health.

Using this third-party data, the Alliance is compiling and analyzing data on a variety of topics for the five-county region including: process-of-care quality, readmission rates, mortality rates, patient satisfaction, rates of per capita spending, resource consumption and financial analyses. The Alliance plans to make these reports available by the end of 2009.

### **Alliance Highlighted in National Presentations**

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Over the last few months, the work of the Alliance has been highlighted as an example of what is needed to transform health care across the country - particularly when it comes to transparency. Alliance staff made presentations to the national conference for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and to the National Governor's Association and senior management at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Additionally, the Alliance was highlighted in a recent report from the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP), which shares models and practices from 10 leading state quality improvement partnerships. These programs were highlighted because they have long-term, statewide, systemic quality improvement strategic intent, and transparent agendas.

### **Enter Your Business in the Statewide Healthiest Business Challenge**

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The Puget Sound Health Alliance is pleased to support the Washington Health Foundation's Healthiest State in the Nation Campaign's third annual Healthiest Business Challenge which **starts September 18th!** The Healthiest Business Challenge is a free way to engage your employees in healthy behaviors at work and at home. This six-week challenge is run in conjunction with the Governor's Health Bowl, and it instigates some healthy competition around the state as Washington strives to log 6 million miles of health at [www.HealthiestState.org](http://www.HealthiestState.org).

A full toolkit is available online to help you implement the challenge with little effort:

- Download posters, countdown calendars and promotional materials for your office,
- Find health tips to send to employees as encouragement,
- Read how other businesses have creatively implemented the challenge, and
- Learn more about how the top three businesses will celebrate at a special reception at the Governor's Mansion in January 2010!

To learn more about the Healthiest Business Challenge, visit <http://www.whf.org/events/2009-Healthiest-Business-Challenge>.

### **Local Hospitals Selected to Participate in Quality Improvement Collaborative**

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Harborview Medical Center and Valley Medical Center were selected by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to participate in the Aligning Forces for Quality: Language Quality Improvement Collaborative (Language QI Collaborative). The Collaborative will identify and test ways for hospitals to provide timely, effective language services to patients who speak or understand little or no English.

The Language QI Collaborative is part of Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q), the Foundation's signature program to lift the overall quality of health care in targeted communities, as well as reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and provide models for real reform. For more information, visit our [website](#).

### **From the Atlantic: How American Health Care Killed My Father**

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After the death of his father, the author, a business executive, began a personal exploration of a health-care industry that for years, that he says, has delivered poor service and irregular quality at astonishingly high cost. Despite the emotional title of the article, this is a rational assessment of the need for change. To read the full article, click [here](#).

### **From the Associated Press: Health care claim costs expected to rise 10.5 pct**

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Costs for employer-provided health plans are expected to rise more than 10 percent within the next 12 months, a jump workers may feel in their paychecks or through changes to their insurance coverage. To read the full article click [here](#).

### Upcoming Events

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#### **Northwest Medical Informatics Symposium - September 10-11, 2009**

Inland Northwest Health Services (INHS) in partnership with eHealth Initiative will hold the Northwest Medical Informatics Symposium (NMIS), a health information technology conference featuring national and regional speakers on September 10 and 11 in Spokane, Washington. NMIS brings together urban and rural healthcare professionals to learn about the latest in health information technology including evolving initiatives, improving patient outcomes, safety equipment and software purchasing, training and HIPAA issues. Anyone interested in health information technology, with emphasis on the health care delivery system in the Northwest should attend this conference. Pre- Conference Workshops are featured on September 8 and 9 for individuals who would like to learn more about applications. For information or to register visit [www.nmis.info](http://www.nmis.info)

#### **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>

#### **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>

### Suggestions or Comments about this Update?

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