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**Puget Sound Health Alliance Joins with Federal Government in  
Value-Driven Health Care Roundtable**

***U.S. health care sector moves rapidly to provide consumer  
information on value initiative led by HHS Secretary Leavitt***

SEATTLE, May 9, 2007—A top Puget Sound Health Alliance leader today joined key business, union, government, community, and health care officials in Washington D.C. to promote HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt's Value-Driven Health Care movement.

King County Executive Ron Sims, founder and past chair of the Puget Sound Health Alliance, participated with other public and private purchasers, health plan leaders and consumer advocates in a roundtable discussion moderated by Secretary Leavitt. Executive Sims outlined the Alliance's leadership in coordinating with collaborative regional health organizations to measure and report on quality and costs of care.

Sims' remarks followed Governor Carcieri from Rhode Island, and Al Hubbard, Director of the National Economic Council and Assistant to the President for Economic Policy.

The Puget Sound Health Alliance—which is developing its first public report comparing the quality of care provided by local clinics and hospitals—was the first organization in the nation to be designated by Secretary Leavitt as a Community Leader for Value-driven Health Care. This designation is a prerequisite to gaining access to Medicare data for use in public reporting of health care performance.

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"A public comparison report gives patients and employers a powerful tool for choosing health care. It gives providers a powerful tool to improve the care we get," Executive Sims said. "We welcome federal government support in creating comparison reports. Medicare data will make the reports more robust and ultimately more useful for patients, employers and providers."

The Puget Sound Health Alliance's 140 participants are using evidence to identify and measure quality health care, then produce a comparison report designed for use in health care decision-making. The report will be available to the public. The Health Alliance has already received data from area health plans and purchasers for over two million people in the Pacific Northwest (without information that could identify individual patients).

The report will compare the quality of care provided in local clinics and hospitals in King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish and Thurston counties and is expected to be available late this year.

"It's wonderful to see Secretary Leavitt showing this kind of leadership in such an important area. Regional health improvement collaboratives such as the Alliance are the best hope we have for improving the quality and value of health care in the country," said Margaret Stanley, Health Alliance executive director. "We are looking forward to adding Medicare data in the future so that physicians will have a complete picture of their patient population."

At the beginning of the year, the Health Alliance—along with many of its participating businesses, health plans and provider organizations—were among the first to publicly commit to Secretary Leavitt's "four cornerstones" of value-driven care: health information technology, public reporting of provider quality information, public reporting of cost information, and incentives for value comparison.

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Secretary Leavitt announced that less than a year after launching his Value-Driven Health Care Initiative, more than 100 million Americans are now served by health plans that are committed to providing consumers with transparent quality and cost information. The federal government; half of the states; about 775 employers, including almost half of the top 200 U.S. corporations; and numerous unions, communities, doctors and hospitals have joined the movement.

“We are organizing the health care market to achieve better quality health care, at lower cost, for all Americans. That is the definition of value,” Secretary Leavitt said. “Yet until now, our health care system has been marked by a lack of consumer information to support value-based decisions.”

Compared with other industries, little quality and cost information has been available to health consumers until recently, Secretary Leavitt noted.

“Consumers have extensive information to help them make good choices when they buy cars or get mortgages,” Secretary Leavitt said. “But when it comes to choices about their health care, little information about quality or cost has been available. The purpose of the Value-Driven Health Care movement is to make that information available, and then reward people for using it.” More information on Value-Driven Health Care is available at [www.hhs.gov/valuedriven](http://www.hhs.gov/valuedriven).

The Puget Sound Health Alliance ([www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org](http://www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org)) is a private, non-profit organization – a team effort of those who provide, pay for and use health care services, working together to improve the quality of patient care for a healthier community, at a price more people can afford.

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