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## **PUGET SOUND HEALTH ALLIANCE RECEIVES \$1 MILLION TO IMPROVE QUALITY, VALUE OF HEALTH CARE IN REGION**

*The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation selects local nonprofit to continue in national effort*

**Seattle, WA (May 7, 2013)** – The Puget Sound Health Alliance (Alliance) announced today that it has been awarded a grant of \$1 million over the next two years for the final phase of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s [\*Aligning Forces for Quality \(AF4Q\) initiative\*](#), a national effort to lift the quality and value of health care in communities across America.

The Alliance is one of 16 organizations across the country designated as an AF4Q community, and has been participating in the initiative since it was launched in 2006.

The *Aligning Forces for Quality* program remains the largest effort of its kind ever undertaken by a U.S. philanthropy. The goal of the program mirrors the Alliance’s own mission to align the efforts of health care purchasers, payers and providers in reducing unwarranted variation and improving the overall value of health care through a set of core strategies: measuring and reporting the quality and cost of healthcare provided by local physicians and hospitals; engaging patients in their care; collaborating with other organizations to support quality improvement programs in doctors’ offices and hospitals, and exploring new payment methods that support value rather than volume.

In the fourth and final phase of AF4Q, the Alliance will accelerate its work, leveraging progress in these focus areas and striving for sustainable progress in meeting the goals of a reformed health care system: better value, greater transparency, and improved care coordination.

“Clearly, the funding that we have received from RWJF has been tremendously valuable to the Alliance. It has allowed us to establish a firm foundation from which to work, develop our capabilities and expand into new areas,” said Mary McWilliams, the Alliance’s executive director. “More importantly, AF4Q connected us to our peers around the country and has been instrumental in helping the Alliance articulate its own vision for our region.”

In the next two years, the Alliance will continue to expand upon its foundational competency of performance measurement and reporting and work with its stakeholders to improve the quality and value of health care in the region.

“The final phase of this program is not so much an end as a beginning,” said Anne F. Weiss, MPP, team director and senior program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “Our goal is not just lasting change in these 16 communities, but also to provide models of reform for the rest of the country to follow.”

AF4Q is designed to drive quality improvement by aligning key players in communities, and brings an unprecedented commitment of resources, expertise, and training to turn proven practices into real results. The Alliance’s continued participation brings direct financial support and technical assistance and training from national experts, coordinated by the Center for Health Care Quality at The George Washington University, the national AF4Q program office.

Additional grant recipients include:

- Albuquerque Coalition for Healthcare Quality – Albuquerque, N.M.
- Alliance for Health – Grand Rapids, Mich.
- Better Health *Greater* Cleveland – Cleveland
- California Center for Rural Policy – Arcata, Calif.
- Greater Detroit Area Health Council – Detroit
- Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati – Cincinnati
- Healthy Memphis Common Table – Memphis, Tenn.
- Healthy York County Coalition – York, Pa.
- Kansas City Quality Improvement Consortium – Kansas City, Mo.
- Maine Aligning Forces for Quality – Augusta, Maine
- Massachusetts Health Quality Partners – Boston
- Minnesota Community Measurement – Minneapolis
- Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation – Portland, Ore.
- P<sup>2</sup> Collaborative of Western New York – Buffalo, N.Y.
- Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality – Madison, Wis.

For more information about the Alliance and its work, visit [www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org](http://www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org).

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#### **About The Puget Sound Health Alliance**

*The Puget Sound Health Alliance (<http://www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org/>), an Aligning Forces for Quality Community, is a non-profit made up of those who provide, pay for and use health care, working to improve quality of care at a price more people can afford. More than 165 organizations have joined the Alliance, including The Boeing Company, Starbucks, Puget Sound Energy, Washington State Health Care Authority, King County and many other employers, physician groups, hospitals, consumer organizations, unions, health plans, pharmaceutical companies, associations and others. A cornerstone of the Alliance work is the Community Checkup, a regional report to the public comparing the performance of clinics and hospitals for basic measures of quality care in the Puget Sound area ([www.wacommunitycheckup.org](http://www.wacommunitycheckup.org))*