



UPDATE for Alliance Participants



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last week, I joined more than 500 health care and business leaders at the 2015 State of Reform Health Policy Conference. For almost 30 years, this event has been inspiring and shaping health care policy in our state. Occurring at the beginning of this year's legislative session, it was the perfect place to discuss with policymakers what our state's priorities should be. And this legislative session in particular is one that will have profound impact on the health of Washington state citizens. [Read more from our executive director.](#)

ALLIANCE UPDATES

Join us for our next All-Alliance meeting on January 29

2015 marks the tenth anniversary of the Alliance's founding, so it's appropriate to mark the occasion with an overview of how far we've come and where we are headed. Alliance Director Nancy Giunto will provide an update on the state of the Alliance, with particular attention to the 2015 legislative effort to establish an effective All-Payer Claims Database in Washington and what that means for the future of health care cost and quality transparency.

Three new reports on potential overuse of health care services

At the upcoming All Alliance meeting, we will unveil results from three new reports, each focused on potentially avoidable overuse of health care services: a report on geographic variation of procedure rates, a report on potentially avoidable ER visits and a report on hospital readmissions within 30 days. These are the latest in the Alliance's expanding line of reports to provide greater insight into the challenges and successes in our health care system.

Washington health care leaders give the Washington Health Alliance a positive rating

In the first annual State of Reform [Healthcare Leadership Outlook survey](#), health care leaders from across the state weighed in the future of health care in our state. The Alliance was one of several organizations that received a positive rating.

Thank you to participants of December Disparities in Care event

On December 11, more than 60 people attended a panel discussion on population health and health care disparities. Dr. Peter McGough of the UW Neighborhood Clinics and chair of the Alliance's Quality Improvement Committee facilitated a lively discussion. Thank you to Alliance member Evergreen Hospital who generously provided the venue.

Alliance Board Treasurer Dr. David Grossman appointed vice chair of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

Congratulations to Dr. David Grossman who has been appointed vice chair of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, which makes evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services like screening, counseling, and preventive medicine. Dr. Grossman was appointed to this position by the director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and his term will begin in March 2015.

ON THE BLOG

[Health care transparency and the value equation](#)

When we are in the doctor's office, we all want the highest quality of care. While quality is obviously a very high priority, it isn't the only thing that matters when making a decision about health care. A better way to think about it is the value of the health care service.

[Alliance partners with Consumer Reports to disseminate health care quality information](#)

Thanks to a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Alliance will be joining a new initiative to make information about health care quality broadly available to consumers. The effort, called [The DOCTOR Project](#), brings together ten communities across the country to work to disseminate their quality data in partnership with Consumer Reports magazine, which will publish the data in special issues.

[Washington receives \\$65 million to accelerate health care innovation](#)

Washington state just received a very nice Christmas gift from the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) in the form of a [\\$65 million grant](#) to accelerate health care innovation in the state. The grant will allow the state to implement key elements of its [Health Care Innovation Plan](#).

[Purchaser power in the health care market](#)

More than half of Americans get their health insurance through their employer. As a group, employers have enormous power to shape the health care market. But, employers rarely realize this. That's why it's important and encouraging to see leading employers in our state, such as Boeing and Starbucks (both Alliance members), step up and [demand higher quality health care for their employees](#).

NEWS TO KNOW

[Doing more for patients often does no good | *The New York Times*](#)

[Health-law test to cut readmissions lacks early results | *Kaiser Health News*](#)

[Skipped care a side effect of high-deductible health plans | *The Seattle Times*](#)

[WA's health care leaders remain optimistic in face of challenges | *State of Reform*](#)

NEW MEMBERS

We are excited to welcome four new members to the Alliance.

- The [Association of Washington Cities](#), representing 281 towns and cities across the state, making them not just a major purchaser of health care in Washington, but one with broad reach geographically as the Alliance continues its statewide expansion.
- [Seattle Children's](#), recognized as an international leader in pediatric clinical care and research.
- The [Midwives Association of Washington State](#), a nonprofit professional organization dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of women and families.
- [Kelley-Ross Prescription Pharmacy](#), committed to providing the highest level of pharmacy service to the patients, providers and caregivers in the community.

We're grateful to our new members for recognizing the importance of the Alliance's work and for helping us to move the needle toward a more transparent and high-quality health system.

UPCOMING ALLIANCE MEETINGS

Alliance participants are welcome to attend any Alliance board, committee or work group meeting, except board retreats. RSVP to joyld@wahealthalliance.org.

Final APCD Joint Advisory Committee

January 16, 9:00–12:00 p.m., [One Union Square Boardroom](#)

Board of Directors

January 27, 2:30–4:30 p.m., [Alliance Office](#), 2nd floor community conference room

All Alliance Meeting

January 29, 7:30–9:30 a.m., [One Union Square Boardroom](#)

Consumer Engagement Committee

February 11, 10:00–11:00 a.m., [teleconference](#)

Health Economics Committee

February 12, 8:30–10:30 a.m., [Alliance Office](#)

Quality Improvement Committee

February 12, 2:00–4:00 p.m., [Alliance Office](#)

LEARN MORE

Choosing Wisely

Choosing Wisely is a campaign designed to provide easy-to-understand guides for getting better, safer, more effective care. It is a partnership between the Alliance, The American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), the Washington State Medical Association, and others. [Learn more.](#)

Visit the Community Checkup website

The Community Checkup website helps consumers make informed choices by giving them access to a robust and accessible supply of data and resources. The website is regularly updated with new information and data; for example, new results for hospital measures from the Leapfrog Group and Hospital Compare. [Learn more.](#)

Follow the Alliance on Twitter

We invite you to follow the Alliance on Twitter [@WAHealthCheckup](#).

Follow the Alliance on LinkedIn

We invite you to follow the Alliance on our [LinkedIn company page](#).

The Washington Health Alliance brings together those who give, get and pay for health care to create a high-quality, affordable system for the people of Washington state.

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