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## **Washington State awarded \$3.4 million data center grant**

*Health Care Authority, Puget Sound Health Alliance to partner  
on project to make health care pricing more transparent*

Washington State Health Care Authority Director Dorothy Teeter announced today that the state will partner with the Puget Sound Health Alliance to use a \$3.4 million, two-year federal grant to improve health care pricing transparency and augment rate review. This will make it easier for consumers, businesses and others to understand these important issues.

The project will use medical claims data to develop a comprehensive view of the variation in utilization of and prices paid for health care services in the state. In addition, the data can be used for research on methods to boost quality of care and improve health outcomes.

The grant was applied for and awarded to the Washington State Office of Financial Management, which will coordinate the grant work among the project partners to build the data center.

“The Alliance is both honored and excited to partner with the state on the data center,” said Mary McWilliams, executive director of the Alliance. “Thanks to the \$20 million that our members and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation have invested in the Alliance since its founding in 2004, we are fortunate to have an infrastructure and database that provide a solid starting point for building out the data center.”

“The entire health care system will benefit from this information and the transparency that will allow providers, employers, stakeholders and consumers to understand the basis for pricing services,” Teeter said. “Our past, present and future relationship with the Alliance is perfect for this work.”

The [Puget Sound Health Alliance](#) is a Seattle-based, multi-stakeholder nonprofit dedicated to promoting health and improving the quality and affordability of health care. The Alliance’s work currently includes performance measurement, public reporting, performance improvement, consumer engagement and payment reform in Washington. Because of the Alliance’s existing investment in measurement and reporting, nongovernmental sources will provide nearly half of the total project cost.

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The Alliance will use the federal funding from the grant to establish the framework for implementing an All Payer Claims Database that builds upon the Alliance's existing capabilities. Other states such as Maine, Colorado, Utah and Virginia have implemented APCDs successfully.

At present, the Alliance produces the [Community Checkup](#), a rating of quality care in the region, using medical claims data from health plans, self-insured purchasers and Medicaid that covers approximately 3 million lives. The Alliance will release county-level data for the entire state for the first time later this year.

**For background and questions:**

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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 nonprofit 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)).

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