

UPDATE for the Community



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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This month's letter is written by Deputy Director Susie Dade on a timely topic, the impact of purchasers on value-based purchasing strategies – one of her many areas of expertise.

Earlier this year, PricewaterhouseCoopers released their 2018 "Health and Well-being Touchstone [Survey Results](#)." This survey includes data from over 900 participating employers in 37 industries across the U.S (22% from the Northwest). The report provides a view into the current landscape and future outlook for health care benefits and other parts of the "total rewards" equation for employers and other healthcare purchasers.

Here is one of the key takeaways from the report that caught our eye at the Washington Health Alliance, and had us wanting to know more. *"While healthcare cost increases continue to outpace general inflation, other factors such as a tight labor market and an influx of cash from tax reform have allowed employers to hit the "pause" button [on value-based purchasing]. This has resulted in a continuation of the status quo rather than the adoption of new, emerging strategies."* ([READ MORE HERE](#))

ALLIANCE UPDATES

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DROP THE PRE-OP!

Physicians Agree: All patients need pre-op EVALUATION, but a low-risk patient having a low-risk procedure does not need pre-op TESTING.

Drop the Pre-op!

Physicians Agree: All patients need pre-

Join Us

Are you interested in learning more about membership in the Alliance? [Learn more about the value of Alliance membership.](#)

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. [Learn more.](#)

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op **evaluation**, but a low-risk patient having a low-risk procedure does not need pre-op **testing**.

Why is pre-op testing unnecessary?

Routine preoperative lab studies, EKGs, X-rays and pulmonary function tests on *healthy patients before low-risk procedures* are not recommended because they are unlikely to provide useful, actionable information related to the procedure and may actually cause delays in care. They also cost patients time and money as well increasing **wasteful health care spending**.

Why are tests ordered if they aren't needed?

Clinicians often order the same pre-op tests for all patients/procedures based on habit – regardless of the patient's health or the level of risk associated with the procedure.

What can be done about it?

Providing high-quality care to patients includes eliminating unnecessary tests, treatments and procedures. The Washington State Choosing Wisely Task Force has come up with a campaign and a **flyer** to educate physicians, hospitals, health care organizations and payers about unnecessary pre-op testing and actions they can take including education, using evaluation checklists to optimize surgical outcomes and providing prompt and clear peer-to-peer feedback when unnecessary pre-op testing occurs.

As an Alliance member, you can do your part to reduce unnecessary care by reading and sharing the task force's "Drop the Pre-op!" **flyer**. More about the Choosing Wisely Task Force and the campaign can be found **here**.

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.



Alliance's Affordability Conference at Capacity

With health care foremost on the minds of voters as they head to the polls in two weeks, the Washington Health Alliance's October 31 **one-day affordability summit** is full. Registration for "The Road to Affordable Care: where do we go from here in Washington State?" is now closed. More than a quarter of the 180 stakeholders attending are purchasers; the rest represent Accountable Communities of Health, providers, health plans and others. With local and national speakers and a cross section of registrants representing, health care purchasers, providers, plans, Accountable Communities of Health, pharmaceutical companies and others, we are anticipating some rich discussions around the health care affordability crisis. As part of the conference objectives, we will be compiling answers to the question: "*What are the three most important action steps needed to address health care affordability?*" Responses will be shared in our next newsletter, so stay tuned!



Alliance Staff Offers Expertise at Multiple Speaking Engagements

Because of the Alliance's reputation as an expert and leader in the areas of health care value, data reporting, and quality improvement, Executive

Director Nancy Giunto and Deputy Director Susie Dade are frequently invited to be key note and panel presenters at conferences across the nation. This fall has been no exception for the Alliance's leadership with presentations on both coasts in September, October and November.

After returning from testifying before congress in Washington D.C., Nancy Giunto has been presenting at a number of national conferences in October and November on the topic of using data to measure value, including the "Rhode Island Health Care Cost Trends Project." Her November presentation will focus on leveraging Multi-Payer Claims Databases for Value. This conference is supported by The Peterson Center on Healthcare, a non-profit dedicated to transforming U.S. health care into a high-performance system by improving quality and lowering costs. Nancy also spoke at:

- The Health Insight Board Retreat in San Diego,
- The Network for Regional Health Improvement national affordability conference in Washington, D.C.
- Our own affordability conference in Seattle

Susie Dade has been invited to speak on health care waste at several conferences, including:

- The National Association of Governmental Risk Pools in Portland, Oregon
- The National Association of Health Data Organizations (NAHDO) in Park City, Utah
- Milliman's National Health Care Intelligence Client Forum in Las Vegas, Nevada

In November Susie will speak at the National Alliance of Health Care Purchaser Coalitions' Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. Our national reputation is a reflection of the hard work and participation of our members. We couldn't do it without you. Thank you for your support!



Your Partner in Health

The Alliance's consumer-facing informational website, [Own Your Health](#), has received a fresh new look and additional resources thanks to members of the Alliance's Consumer Education Committee, (CEC) who have been working together to update the site, making it more engaging and useful to users.

The refresh plan also includes growing our outreach to purchasers and other partners through [Own Your Health Partner Pages](#). These pages provide employers/members with "value added" by having a page of health resources tailored to their organization all in one place to share with employees, as well as a calendar of promotional ideas. The Alliance can work with organizations to create their own site and collateral such as the "Five Questions to Ask Your Doctor" wallet cards. If you are interested in having a partner page for your organization, contact Rebecca Snyders, Sr. Communications Manager. And you can join the conversation on the Own Your Health [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts, @OwnYourHealthWA.

Joining the Alliance

If you or someone you know would like to learn more about membership in the Alliance, we have an online tool to help you learn about the value of Alliance membership [Learn more at our Join Us website](#).