UPDATE
for the Community

WHA WASHINGTON HEALTH ALLIANCE

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At the Alliance's Board of Directors retreat last week, we talked a lot about how we define and measure the impact of the Alliance's work. We know very well that you can't improve what you don't measure and we are not immune from the magnifying glass we use to evaluate the health care system. The only way we can know if we are accomplishing our mission and vision is to track our progress.

Our mission, "to build and maintain a strong alliance among purchasers, providers, health plans, and consumers to promote health and improve the quality and affordability of the health care system in Washington state," is a good one. I would say that with our 185+ members, we have built and maintain a strong collaborative group that is deeply committed to improving the quality and affordability of health care in our state. With our waste, quality, and pricing research, we are taking important steps to understand the issues that keep us from the high quality and low cost health care we hope to accomplish.

(Read the full letter HERE)

ALLIANCE UPDATES

- Lower Health Care Cost Draft Legislation Released
- RAND Corporation Recommends All-Payer Claims Databases to Help Lower Prices
- Joining the Alliance

Lower Health Care Cost Draft Legislation Released

On May 23rd, the Senate Health, Education,

Labor and Pensions Committee released its long-awaited bipartisan draft legislation aimed at reducing health care costs. Senate health committee Chairman Lamar Alexander says of the nearly three dozen provisions, "We hope to move it through the health committee in June, put it on the Senate floor in July and make it law." Ranking Member Senator Patty Murray says, "The steps we are taking on important issue like surprise medical billing, drug prices, maternal mortality, and vaccine hesitancy show we can make progress when both sides are at the table ready to put patients and families first." Comments on the draft must be sent to LowerHealthCareCosts@help.senate.gov by 5 PM on June 5th.

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.

RAND Corporation Recommends All-Payer Claims Databases to Help Lower Prices

New hospital pricing research by the RAND Corporation shows large discrepancies between what private health plans pay for hospital services and what Medicare pays. RAND analyzed $13 billion in hospital spending from 2015 through 2017 in 25 states and found employers pay almost 250% of Medicare rates on average for hospital services, almost 300% for outpatient and 200% for inpatient treatment. RAND recommends that employers:

- exert more pressure on health plans and hospitals to shift away from discounted charge contracts to contracts based on a multiple of Medicare or some other prospective case rate;
- can use networks and benefit designs to move patients away from high-priced, low-value hospitals and health systems;
- encourage price transparency by participating in All-Payer Claims Databases; and
- exert more pressure on their negotiations, including placing limits on out-of-network care payments and using benefit design changes to target high prices.

Joining the Alliance

Our members can be the best ambassadors for our work. If you know someone who would like to learn more about membership in the Alliance, we have an online tool to help you talk about the value of Alliance membership. Learn more at our Join Us website.