

Alaska Senate Finance Committee Testimony
April 29, 2021

Thank you, Senators Bishop and Stedman, and honorable members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Nancy Giunto and I am the Executive Director of the Washington Health Alliance.

My organization is a place where for the last seventeen years, stakeholders have come together to work collaboratively to transform Washington State's health care system for the better. Our members share a common commitment to drive change and include employers, Taft Hartley Union Trusts, providers, health plans, and consumers. 185 member organizations belong to the Washington Health Alliance, some doing business in Alaska.

The Alliance has two core competencies. First, we are a trusted convener for stakeholders, promoting a collective conversation around improvement. Second, we are a data aggregator for the purpose of performance measurement and public reporting.

Much of the data for our work comes from a *voluntary* All Payer Claims Database that we started in 2007. We are the Lead Organization for this database, and are considered the trusted, neutral third party to develop analyses and collaborate around improvement.

The Alliance's APCD is supported by more than 24 data submitters, including commercial and Medicaid insurers in our state plus self-funded ERISA employers. Our data is very robust and it includes demographic, quality and pricing information. Privacy and security of patient data is vital, and we take many precautions to ensure its safety, and that patient level identifiable data is never revealed.

We develop our reports collaboratively through a robust Alliance committee structure. Participants help us decide what to report on, and how to report it. Transparency moves at the speed of trust, and the effort must include all who want a place at the table and who are committed to change.

Employers and union trusts use our work to design benefits and to inform wellness program initiatives. Providers use our work in their quality improvement efforts. Health plans use our work for marketplace benchmarking.

Let me highlight two recent reports to showcase how we put our APCD to use. These reports and more are available publicly.

First, the *Community Checkup [report](#)*, where we publish data on variation in health care quality. Our findings consistently show that the door a patient walks through determines

the quality of care they receive. There is tremendous variation in the quality of care between medical groups in our state.

The second report is called [*First, Do No Harm*](#). Care that is not based on clinical evidence is wasteful, and it may cause harm to patients physically, mentally, and/or financially. In this report we examine 47 common procedures and treatments that are considered to be overused by trusted national clinical experts. Over a four-year period, we found that 51% of the services we measured were low value, and that over \$703M was spent on this unnecessary care. We have several initiatives underway to eliminate wasteful care in WA.

I applaud your efforts to create an APCD in the state of Alaska. It takes courage to recognize publicly that health care cost and quality varies greatly between providers and across geographies, and that our current system is unaffordable and unsustainable.

I wish you luck as you consider this exciting new venture and offer my support, as well as that of my organization, the Washington Health Alliance, to aid in any way.

Thank you.