

Alliance to Join State of Reform Panel on Total Cost of Care

Alliance Director of Performance Improvement and Innovation, Karen Johnson, PhD, will be part of a panel discussion on health care cost that asks the question, ***Are We Making Progress on the Unit-Cost of Care?*** during the [2021 Inland Northwest State of Reform Health Policy Conference](#) on September 9th from 9:30 am to 10:15 am PT, now being held remotely. Karen will be joined by Dr. Mary Kay O'Neill, Senior Health Care Consultant at Total Health Management, West, Mercer, and Hiroshi Nakano, Vice President, Value Based Initiatives at Valley Medical Center.

This multi-perspective panel will feature a conversation on the progress being made in Washington state to address the total cost of care with a look at trends in health care costs, along with current and future efforts to lower costs. Maryland is the first state to participate in a Total Cost of Care Model with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services over eight years (2019 to 2026). Maryland is required to generate \$2 billion in Medicare savings over eight years. An independent [evaluation](#) of the first two years of the program showed that Maryland had generated \$365 million in Medicare savings that exceeded its \$120 million target. In addition to cost savings, Maryland has also set goals to improve population health by reducing mean body mass index, the incidence of diabetes, and the number of opioid and other drug overdose deaths.

Currently, the Alliance is working with the Quality Improvement and Health Economics Committees on a Total Cost of Care report expected to be released this year. With it, we expect to provide valuable insights that can inform strategies to reduce health care costs while improving quality and population health in Washington state.