



Looking Ahead

To further our goal of achieving a more effective and efficient health care system in the region, the Alliance intends to continue expanding the Community Checkup. For medical groups and hospitals, we will continue to add measures as they become available and develop new data sources (e.g., electronic medical records) when possible. We also have a commitment to finding ways to stratify performance results by race, ethnicity, and/or primary language so that, collectively, we may better understand health care disparities in our region. In addition to expanding our current reporting capability for medical groups and hospitals, future activities also include the following:

Health Plan Performance Reports from eValue8™.

The Alliance recently completed its second year of sponsoring the eValue8™ process in the Puget Sound area. eValue8™ is widely used by coalitions, their purchaser members, and national employers to assess and manage the quality of their health care vendors. The eValue8™ tool focuses on critical quality-related activities such as consumer engagement, provider performance, pharmacy management, prevention and health promotion, chronic disease management and behavioral health. The eValue8™ process permits purchasers to measure the relative performance of the health plans within their market and benchmark that performance to best practice nationally. The Alliance is currently one of 23 coalitions across the country that uses the eValue8™ tool - this number grows each year.

The Alliance strives to advance transparency of variation in performance to drive quality improvement in health care within the Puget Sound region. Our use of the eValue8™ tool is intended to:

1. Generate consistency in the assessment of health plans that enables transparency of performance and permits comparison within and across markets, including national benchmarks and best practices;
2. Stimulate improved performance from health plans, with a particular focus on information, systems and tools within the control of the plan that can be used to encourage and support improved performance from providers and delivery systems, as well as promote consumer behavior for wellness and informed decision-making;
3. Enable purchasers and health plans to work collaboratively to structure health insurance and benefit programs to reward value; and
4. Inform purchasers' procurement decisions about health insurance for their employees and dependents.

In 2008 and again in 2009, six health plans participated in eValue8™ in the Puget Sound market. The plans are: Aetna, CIGNA, Group Health Cooperative, Premera, Regence, and United Healthcare. By September, the Alliance intends to include the 2009 summary level results by health plan at www.WACommunityCheckup.org. Be sure to check for the new health plan tab.

Report on Resource Use in our Region

The Alliance will begin reporting on resource use in our region in 2009. Measuring resource use is an important step on the path to measuring value, a characteristic that includes both quality and resources. The resource reports are currently in development and we expect to release reports in the following areas over time:

- **Hospital Discharges, Costs, Service Intensity and Quality.** These reports will be drawn from publicly available data sources such as Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Dartmouth Atlas, and the Washington State Department of Health.
- **Hospitalizations.** These reports will be generated from the dataset aggregated by the Alliance and will include information on the amount and type of care delivered during hospital stays by severity of the condition. The reports will include both professional and facility components of inpatient stays. Results will be summarized for each pairing of admitting hospital and active medical group.
- **Surgery Rates.** These reports will be modeled after the Dartmouth Atlas reports but will be generated from the Alliance dataset to present population-based rates of selected surgeries and procedures of interest in our region. Surgical treatments for conditions that also have non-surgical treatment options will be the focus.
- **Episodes of Care** We anticipate that these reports will be developed in the future. They will feature public domain episode of care specifications currently being developed nationally by the Quality Alliance Steering Committee. The initial wave of conditions likely to be featured will be Heart Attack, Congestive Heart Failure, Angina/Coronary Artery Disease, Diabetes, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, and Asthma.

Report on Patient Experience

Patient experience data is currently available for the hospital setting through Hospital Compare and these results are included on the Community Checkup website. Although a number of medical groups in the area measure and review patient satisfaction with their practices, currently there is no process in place to standardize the measurement of patient experience with doctors' offices across the Puget Sound region and then share these results publicly. The Puget Sound Health Alliance has completed a proposal for fielding the Clinician and Group CAHPS survey in our community and publicly reporting results, and is currently seeking funding to proceed. Community agreement to measure patient experience using a common survey instrument and protocol would produce standard, comparable results for participating medical groups, similar to the quality measures already included in the Community Checkup. Adding measures of patient experience is very important, particularly to consumers of health care, and would be a significant advancement for transparency and health care quality in our region.