

**STATE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INSTITUTE
WASHINGTON UPDATE
MARCH 2009**

**WHAT IS THE LATEST PROGRESS YOUR STATE TEAM HAS MADE IN ITS
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS?**

Washington's Quality Institute team continues to focus on the concept of a patient-centered medical home, however progress since our last update has been narrowly targeted.

a. Expand patient-centered medical homes

Training for Physician Practices: Directed by the Department of Health (DOH), work in developing the Washington Patient-Centered Medical Home Collaborative continues to progress. Enrollment of 20-40 practices will begin the end of March, depending on Legislative appropriation of funding. Practices must have a clinic registry (with or without an electronic health record) and see Medicaid patients. They will be required to report changes in clinical processes and outcomes focused on prevention, screening and management of high risk diseases. The Collaborative Learning Sessions will begin September 2009 and continue every 6 months for 2 years, with assigned coaches, site visits, conference calls, webinars and listservs supporting changes being made by each practice.

Conversations with health plans continue towards identifying clinical outcomes they are interested in being tracked. Although this has been a challenge, there is support for aggregation of data to measure changes in cost/utilization, since practices are not equipped to do this themselves.

b. Develop payment strategies to support medical homes

Status of Current Legislative Discussions: Two companion bills are progressing through the current legislative process and have now passed out of their houses of origin with solid support.

- At the Governor's request Senate Bill 5891/House Bill 2114 direct State agencies to continue their previous work through the design and implementation of one or more primary care medical home reimbursement pilots. Testimony from a broad group of public and private stakeholders acknowledges that these bills demonstrate the commitment of policymakers to medical homes (and thus primary care); the need for public/private collaboration; and the recognition that antitrust concerns that discourage health care participation must be dealt with. Progress on the bills is available at: <http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?year=2009&bill=5891> and <http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=2114&year=2009>

Stakeholdering Conversations: Consistent with recommendations from our December report, the State and the Puget Sound Health Alliance (PSHA) co-convened a meeting of large purchasers interested in participating on an oversight committee to guide realistic next steps. We will update SQII participants on outcomes during the March 19th team leader phone call.

- 2. WHAT IS SOMETHING YOUR STATE TEAM HAS LEARNED AS IT WORKS TO IMPLEMENT THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS OUTLINED IN YOUR FINAL ACTION PLAN? and**
- 3. WHAT HAS YOUR STATE TEAM BEEN CHALLENGED BY DURING THIS PROCESS?**

At this point our challenges and lessons learned continue to reflect those mentioned in our most recent updates. In addition, our Collaborative work has been challenged in:

- implementing a fairly long-term expansive plan without secure funding sources (it's hard to make promises that might become a "take-away" in the end) and
- pinning down the clinical changes payers want to actually see demonstrated to know that medical homes "work" and payment reforms are warranted (but payers do continue to be clearly interested in the "potential" of practice improvement).