

**STATE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INSTITUTE
WASHINGTON UPDATE
NOVEMBER 2008**

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

As in our last update we've organized the set of Washington's quality improvement efforts that are focused on the concept of a patient-centered medical home around the three policy levers identified in our original Quality Institute (QI) proposal. This update represents progress since the September 12 report.

a. Expand patient-centered medical homes

- *Training for physician practices:* As a next step in development of the Washington Learning Collaboratives a panel of local and national experts came together on October 29th to identify specific measures that would quantify progress towards adoption of medical home concepts by Washington primary care practices. The meeting was sponsored by the Washington State Department of Health, hosted by the Puget Sound Health Alliance and facilitated by Dr. Ed Wagner from the Sandy MacColl Institute at Group Health. Ideas relating to measurement of change and the population of focus are being vetted with 5 focus groups this month. Another learning session for current Collaboratives that include medical homes for children with special health care needs occurred on November 5th.
- *Review of Factoria medical home changes:* In October a preview of results from Group Health's evaluation of medical home enhancement (piloted at their Factoria clinic) was shared with legislative staff and legislators. A peer reviewed paper is about to be published in JAMA describing the positive impact on patients and providers, as well as the overall decrease in utilization of health services and per member per month cost.
- *Inventory of medical home-related efforts:* As grounding for the State's legislatively directed reimbursement study and to raise awareness of the extent of "linked" activities, we are gathering input from the Primary Care Coalition's survey of medical-home-related efforts underway in Washington State.

b. Develop payment strategies to support medical homes

- *Quality Institute September 15th presentations in Seattle:* To support the reimbursement study directed by the 2008 Legislature (E2SHB-2549) and Primary Care-Pilot Projects, Quality Institute experts (Michael Bailit and Enrique Martinez-Vidal) shared their expertise on the array of payment models currently being tested to support adoption of medical homes around the nation. They provided insights on the Primary Care Coalition's recommendations and facilitated a lively discussion with representatives from provider, payer, and purchasing communities.
- *Report to Legislature:* Consultant work continues on a report of payment alternatives in support of development and maintenance of the medical home model in Washington State. A draft is anticipated in early December for review by key stakeholders.
- *Governor's "A" team:* Several of the team members participate in the Governor's Health "A" team and are incorporating the work of the Quality Institute in the "A" team recommendations around medical home reimbursement pilots. A pilot proposal is under development.
- *Background materials:* The WA State Health Care Authority has developed a web site through which medical home-related information relevant to the state's work can be broadly accessible. http://www.hca.wa.gov/medical_homes.html

c. Develop communication strategies for engaging consumers

- *Patient Decision Aids*: The Washington State Shared Decision-making Collaborative is continuing implementation of SB 5930's pilot to reduce unwarranted variation by empowering patients with better information about treatment options. The Collaborative likely will add two major primary care/multispecialty group practice sites, joining Group Health Cooperative. These three sites will implement use of patient decision aids to help engage patients and doctors in joint decision-making around treatment options for conditions where there are documented high levels of variation in rates of surgical intervention (e.g., treatment for low back pain, osteoarthritis of the hip and knee, benign prostate disease and early stage breast cancer).
- *Puget Sound Health Alliance*: The next Community Checkup report will be released on November 13th. This updated and expanded report nearly triples the number of results for medical groups and clinics (i.e., 46 medical groups at more than 170 clinics across the Puget Sound region), adds asthma as a measurement area, and now includes measures for hospital care using data pulled from several public sources. Lessons learned by the Puget Sound Health Alliance were shared with states engaged in the Quality Institute at the latest webinar.

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOUR STATE TEAM HAS LEARNED AS IT WORKS TO IMPLEMENT THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS OUTLINED IN YOUR FINAL ACTION PLAN?

State agencies cannot expect to influence the entire primary care sector on their own. Engaging providers in meaningful and sustainable change requires that a critical mass of public *and private* payers and purchasers is willing to unite around a common structure for financial incentives through reimbursement. This type of significant “push” is needed to engage a critical mass of providers in re-organizing their practices in concert with medical home principles. State staff will be meeting with the Washington CEO Forum on November 14th to discuss the possibilities of joining forces in some medical home pilots being proposed by E2SHB-2549.

WHAT HAS YOUR STATE TEAM BEEN CHALLENGED BY DURING THIS PROCESS?

The team continues to be challenged by time constraints (exacerbated by current fiscal concerns) and the ability to bring team members to the table for meaningful dialogue with any frequency. Work is moving forward, but more slowly than originally anticipated.