

For immediate release

Health Care Authority Recognizes Two Accountable Communities of Health

July 8, 2015

OLYMPIA – The Health Care Authority (HCA) today announced two regional coalitions called Accountable Communities of Health (ACHs) have moved out of the pilot phase and achieved designation as an ACH.

ACHs are an essential component of [Healthier Washington](#), which aims to transform the health system in the state to bring better health, better care and lower costs to Washington residents.

The designated ACHs are:

- Cascade Pacific Action Alliance (CPAA), supported by CHOICE Regional Health Network. The ACH serves Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Thurston and Wahkiakum counties.
- North Sound Accountable Community of Health, supported by Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement (WAHA). The ACH serves Whatcom, Skagit, Island, San Juan and Snohomish counties.

“It is no small undertaking to achieve this level of collaboration not only within the health sector, but also across multiple counties,” HCA Director Dorothy Teeter said. “ACHs are a core strategy in Healthier Washington; they will play a vital leadership role when it comes to improving the health of our residents and the community in which they live.”

The Cascade Pacific Action Alliance has established a strong foundation for cross-sector collaboration to improve health care quality and to increase its value across seven counties in central western Washington.

“We are pleased to see that the hard work of our many diverse stakeholders has resulted in this designation,” said CHOICE Regional Health Network Executive Director Winfried Danke. “We are eager to work with the state toward common ground between our communities’ visions and the state’s health care transformation goals with an emphasis on the social determinants of health.”

The North Sound ACH views community engagement as essential to successful health transformation.

“Health care is delivered locally. The North Sound ACH is working with our communities to bring together two goals of health reform: containing costs and improving patients’ day-to-day lives by integrating care,” said North Sound ACH chair and North Sound Mental Health Administration Executive Director Joe Valentine. “The North Sound ACH is a platform for collaboration among 17 diverse sectors to improve the health of all our residents and we look forward to continuing to partner for a healthier Washington.”

Designation by the HCA signifies that ACHs have demonstrated an operational governance structure that reflects balanced multi-sector engagement, strong backbone support to perform financial, administrative and other collaborative functions, identified priority areas and strengths based upon ongoing regional health needs inventories and assessments, and established an initial operating budget toward a sustainability plan.

What is the work of an ACH?

The ACH supports collaborative decision-making and action on a regional basis to improve individual health care delivery and health systems, focusing on the social determinants of health, clinical-community linkages, and whole person care.

A successful ACH will:

- Build upon existing community-based health improvement coalitions, leveraging and enhancing the relationships, commitments, and initiatives already in place to ensure a diverse, multi-sector approach to health and health care.
- Strengthen community linkages between the local health care delivery system, public health, and others who influence a community's physical and social environments.
- Connect health innovation and transformation efforts at the state and local level.
- Be a resource that health plans draw upon to meet the state's new expectations as they transition from payment for particular health care services to payment for improved outcomes.
- Evaluate and elevate health innovations happening at the local level and facilitate the sharing of information about successes and failures statewide.

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About Washington State Health Care Authority

HCA oversees the state's top two health care purchasers — Washington Apple Health (Medicaid) and the Public Employee Benefits Board Program. We work with partners to help

ensure Washingtonians have access to better health and better care at a lower cost. For more information, visit www.hca.wa.gov.