

Preliminary Report

Washington State Quality Forum



From:

Washington State Health Care Authority

As Required by E2SSB 5930, Section 9

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This report is submitted by the Health Care Authority (HCA) to the Washington State Legislature as directed in Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5930 (E2SSB 5930), Section 9, and enacted as chapter 259, Laws of 2007 (partial veto). The report is intended to be a preliminary report on the early efforts to create the Washington State Quality Forum (Quality Forum), provide details on HCA's interpretation of Section 9, and HCA's initial concepts on how the Quality Forum will be implemented. The annual report that is due in 2008 will provide details on health care quality in WA State.

E2SSB 5930, Section 9 calls for HCA to create the Quality Forum in cooperation with the Puget Sound Health Alliance and other agencies and organizations. The primary purpose of the Quality Forum is to provide increased access and transparency to health care quality and cost data for Washington health care providers, employers, health plans, policy makers, and consumers. The rationale for creating more transparency in the health care system is that quality will increase and costs will decrease. A consequence of decreased costs will be greater access to quality care for Washingtonians.

A number of preparatory tasks have been completed for the implementation of the Quality Forum. An initial set of guiding principles is aligned with recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care Costs and Access, the Governor's Data Transparency Workgroup, and the Puget Sound Health Alliance. The staff at HCA has consulted with similar quality forums in other states and will use best practices from these models. A stakeholder meeting was conducted with interested parties to provide information, solicit input, and align expectations.

The initial list of potential members of the Quality Forum includes representatives from the Health Care Authority (including the Health Technology Assessment program, Washington Wellness, and the Prescription Drug Program), Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Labor and Industries, Department of Health, Office of Financial Management, the Puget Sound Health Alliance, Office of the Insurance Commissioner, Washington State Hospital Association, Agency Medical Directors Group, Washington State Medical Association, Foundation for Health Care Quality, and the Washington Health Foundation. Additional organizations may be represented over time as they are identified.

The work product developed by participants of the Quality Forum will be incorporated into a website created and maintained by the Quality Forum. The website will serve as the Quality Forum's primary vehicle for health care information transparency by providing a portal for Washington health care providers, purchasers, health plans, policy makers, and consumers. The website will be an active, vital means of providing current information to Washington health care stakeholders.



The Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care Costs and Access was co-chaired by Governor Gregoire and Senator Thibaudeau and included twelve other legislative and state agency leaders. The Commission was a bipartisan effort to deliver a five-year plan that will substantially improve access to affordable health care for all Washingtonians. The Commission outlined several key goals, including access to affordable insurance by 2010 for all Washington children and by 2012 for all Washingtonians.

The final report provides 16 specific recommendations and action steps to build a high-quality health care system, provide affordable insurance options for our families, ensure the health of the next generation, and promote prevention and healthy lifestyles. The Washington State Quality Forum was born out of the third recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Commission: Provide cost and quality information for consumers and providers.

A more transparent, rational market for health care could reduce cost pressures, correct quality defects, and reverse decreases in consumer confidence that jeopardize the current system.

Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care Costs and Access Recommendation #3: Provide cost and quality information for consumers and providers.

Informed shoppers are smart shoppers, whether it's purchasing a car or making decisions about health care. Health care consumers need to be engaged and have information that will help them decide what the various options for treatment are, which treatments are most effective, which providers offer the best success rates and at what cost.

Action:

State health purchasing agencies will partner with the Puget Sound Health Alliance and other local organizations to:

- ***Develop a sound set of measures*** allowing consumers to compare provider cost and quality;
- ***Develop Washington-specific information***, modeled after the Dartmouth Atlas, showing how the medical treatment a patient receives varies depending simply on where he or she lives;
- ***Disseminate information*** on cost-effective treatment and best practices, building on the preferred drug list and the technology assessment program.



Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5930 (E2SSB 5930) was requested by Governor Gregoire and sponsored by Senator Karen Keiser. The 2007 Legislature passed the bill with 31 votes in the Senate and 63 votes in the House.

The bill includes over 20 initiatives, many recommended by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care Costs and Access, that will address cost, quality, and access to our health care system, including:

- Five-year plans for changing provider reimbursement and preventing diseases and accidents;
- Creating health record banks to connect providers and patients with their health information when and where they need it;
- Expanding coverage to dependents up to age 25; and
- Changing how we reimburse for health care to pay for quality care and prevention, better manage chronic illnesses, **and establishment of a Quality Forum to evaluate trends in procedures across the state.**

Section 9 establishes the WA State Quality Forum within the Health Care Authority.

In collaboration with the Puget Sound health alliance and other local organizations, the forum shall:

- (1) Collect and disseminate research regarding health care quality, evidence-based medicine, and patient safety to promote best practices, in collaboration with the technology assessment program and the prescription drug program;*
- (2) Coordinate the collection of health care quality data among state health care purchasing agencies;*
- (3) Adopt a set of measures to evaluate and compare health care cost and quality and provider performance;*
- (4) Identify and disseminate information regarding variations in clinical practice patterns across the state; and*
- (5) Produce an annual quality report detailing clinical practice patterns for purchasers, providers, insurers, and policy makers. The agencies shall report to the legislature by September 1, 2007.*



Consultation with Other State Quality Forums

The language contained in E2SSB 5930, Section 9 is modeled after the statutory language that created the Maine Quality Forum (MQF). That being the case, HCA has received ongoing consultation from the MQF to generate ideas for effective implementation. There are considerable differences in the operating environments (legal, political, funding, and organizational) of the MQF and the Washington State Quality Forum; however, there are several building blocks available for us to utilize. The primary building block is that the MQF serves as a convener for agencies and organizations in Maine that are involved in providing, procuring, or measuring health care. The MQF also publishes a website that serves as a health care information portal for Maine's citizens

<www.mainequalityforum.gov>

Additionally, we have consulted with the Minnesota Health Information Network (MHIN). Similar to the MQF, the MHIN also serves a convening function in the Minnesota health care community. The MHIN is staffed by the Department of Health, is advised by a council of health care stakeholders, and operates a website that serves as a health care information portal for Minnesota's citizens <www.minnesotahealthinfo.org>.

Stakeholder Meeting

There are many stakeholders involved in the implementation of E2SSB 5930. HCA coordinated a stakeholder meeting on August 7, 2007, to discuss ideas and align expectations related to several sections of the bill.

Over 100 people attended the meeting to learn more about sections of the bill that may have an impact on them or groups that they represent. It was also an opportunity for stakeholders to share their input and be a part of the development process.

An estimated 15 stakeholders attended the breakout session held to discuss E2SSB 5930, Section 9. The discussion was rich and was an indication that many people in the health care community will be attuned to and involved in the progress of the Quality Forum.

Organizational Structure Being Formed

The organizational structure of the Quality Forum is being developed. The necessary internal agency paperwork is being prepared so that the allotted FTE positions can be filled. The initial structure for Quality Forum membership is also being developed at this time. We anticipate that this task will be finalized by the program director soon after the position is filled.



Quality Forum Staffing

The Quality Forum has been allotted four FTEs. We anticipate these positions will be filled by a program director, a medical consultant, a project specialist, and an administrative assistant. The program director will be responsible for directing all aspects of the Quality Forum and will supervise the activities of the other staff. The medical consultant will provide expertise on clinical issues that arise and will interface with professionals in the medical community. The project specialist will have duties that range from program research to website design and will work closely with the program director to accomplish the tasks of the Quality Forum. The administrative assistant will support the activities of the other staff and be responsible for the coordination of communication among the staff and members of the Quality Forum.

Quality Forum Membership

Membership in the Quality Forum will be comprised of the primary health care data suppliers and aggregators in the state.

The initial list of potential members includes representatives from the Health Care Authority (including the Health Technology Assessment program, Washington Wellness, and the Prescription Drug Program), Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Labor and Industries, Department of Health, Office of Financial Management, the Puget Sound Health Alliance, Office of the Insurance Commissioner, Washington State Hospital Association, Agency Medical Directors Group, Washington State Medical Association, Foundation for Health Care Quality, and the Washington Health Foundation.

Quality Forum Governance

The members of the Quality Forum will serve in an advisory capacity to the Quality Forum staff at HCA.



Consistent with the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care Costs and Access and the language of the enabling legislation, the following guiding principles will serve as the initial springboard for the work of the Quality Forum:

- The Quality Forum aims to work cooperatively and collaboratively with health care partners in the community.

The Quality Forum will not duplicate data collection, aggregation, or analysis that is being conducted by health care partners in the community. Rather, the Quality Forum will join, foster, and influence this work.

- Nationally accepted measures must be used as a basis for quality and efficiency benchmarks. The applicability of such measures to system design should be evaluated in consultation with providers, purchasers, and consumers.
- Providers must be able to compare practice patterns with those of their peers both regionally and across the state, and base improvement efforts on substantive data, not anecdotal evidence.
- Data must be made available to health plans and purchasers.
- Information on provider (including specialists) and facility (e.g., hospitals) quality and efficiency must be made available to consumers.



Doing the Work of the Quality Forum

The Quality Forum will accomplish its work through the use of quarterly face-to-face meetings, ongoing virtual communication, and ad hoc teleconferences or meetings. The Quality Forum will convene to agree how best to accomplish the tasks laid out in the legislation. We expect that this will initially take the form of more accurately identifying existing and developing health care quality and cost data sources and flow, as well as feedback mechanisms for providers, health plans, employers, and consumers. We anticipate that subsequent work will identify critical gaps in knowledge about the quality and cost of health care in Washington and that new data sources or analysis will develop from synergistic partnerships among the members of the Quality Forum.

Website Portal to Washington Health Care Information

The Quality Forum website will serve as a health care information portal for Washington health care providers, purchasers, health plans, policy makers, and consumers.

The work product developed by participants of the Quality Forum will be incorporated into a website created and maintained by the Quality Forum. The website will serve as the Quality Forum's primary vehicle for health care information transparency and will be an active, vital means of providing current information to health care stakeholders.

The initial iteration of the website will convene data and reports from disparate sources throughout the state, region, and nation to provide greater access to this information to health care providers, purchasers, health plans, policy makers, and consumers. Examples of current data reports to be convened by the Quality Forum include:

- Reports on provider performance by the Puget Sound Health Alliance
- Geographic variability in health care by the Office of Financial Management
- Patient safety indicators by the Foundation for Healthcare Quality.
- Hospital quality data through the WA State Hospital Association.

Latter iterations of the website will provide access to information that result from additional collaboration and analysis among members of the Quality Forum.

Annual Report

The Quality Forum will produce an annual report to the Legislature as directed in E2SSB 5930, Section 9. The annual report will summarize and highlight practice patterns for providers, purchasers, health plans, policy makers, and consumers.



The Quality Forum acknowledges work that is ongoing in the health care community and will initially utilize these resources to accomplish its aims. The following resources are currently available and will serve to fulfill the respective directives of E2SSB 5930, Section 9, subsections (1) through (4):

(1) Collect and disseminate research regarding health care quality, evidence-based medicine, and patient safety to promote best practices, in collaboration with the technology assessment program and the prescription drug program;

For this activity, the Quality Forum will collaborate with the Health Technology Assessment program, the Prescription Drug Program, the Puget Sound Health Alliance, the Washington Patient Safety Coalition, the Leapfrog Group, and other similar agencies and organizations. The Quality Forum realizes that these groups are in collaboration with many others and will not seek to duplicate efforts that are already underway.

(2) Coordinate the collection of health care quality data among state health care purchasing agencies;

For this activity, the Quality Forum will coordinate with the Health Care Authority, Department of Social and Health Services, and Labor and Industries to report on existing quality metrics. These metrics will include, but not be limited to, the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS[®]), Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS[®]), performance metrics established by the Department of Labor and Industries, and those adopted by the Puget Sound Health Alliance.

(3) Adopt a set of measures to evaluate and compare health care cost and quality and provider performance;

For this activity, the Quality Forum will closely coordinate with the Puget Sound Health Alliance. The Health Care Authority and the Department of Social and Health Services are currently collaborating with health plans, private employers, health trusts, providers, hospitals, and consumers to evaluate and compare health care cost and quality and provider performance. We anticipate that the Quality Forum will provide additional opportunities for collaboration among member agencies and organizations.

(4) Identify and disseminate information regarding variations in clinical practice patterns across the state;

For this activity, the Quality Forum will closely coordinate with the Puget Sound Health Alliance, Foundation for Health Care Quality, Office of Financial Management, and other agencies and organizations producing similar information.

Timeline for Implementation of the Quality Forum



Activity	Target Date
Hire program director	11/30/07
Convene Quality Forum members for kick-off meeting	12/14/07
Initiate website operation	6/30/08