HCA's Purchasing Strategy

Public Engagement Webinar

September 25, 2026

Washington State Health Care Authority

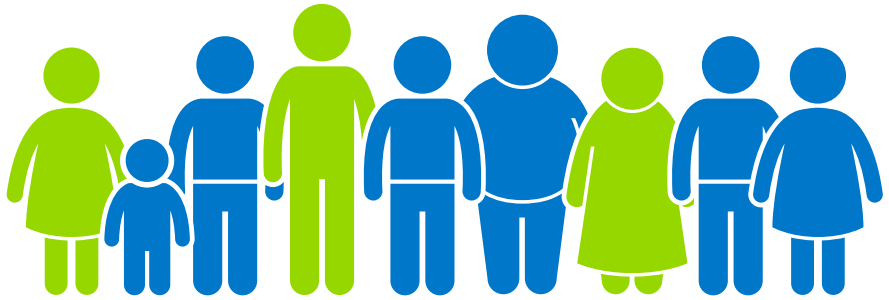
Agenda

- Who is HCA?
- Meeting the challenges ahead
- Four focus areas that guide how and what we buy
- We want to hear from you

Washington State Health Care Authority

The state's largest health care purchaser

- HCA purchases health care for nearly three million Washington residents through HCA's three pillars:
  - Apple Health (Medicaid)
  - Commercial offerings
    - The Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Program
    - The School Employees Benefits Board (SEBB) Program
    - Cascade Select (Public Option)
  - Behavioral health and recovery



"**Purchasing strategy**" refers to the priorities and actions the agency will pursue to advance equitable access to quality, whole-person care for Washingtonians.

Washington State Health Care Authority

HCA vision and mission

Vision

A healthier Washington

Mission

Powered by the people we serve, we improve health across Washington by advancing equitable access to high-quality whole-person care.

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Goals



Respond to the needs of Washingtonians



Close gaps in health disparities and advance health equity



Strengthen agency operations

Strategies

We design and deliver programs, policies, and services that reflect the needs, experiences, and priorities of the people we serve.

We mitigate coverage and service loss while maintaining regulatory compliance.

We work with sovereign Tribal governments, state agencies, and community partners to improve health outcomes by strengthening the quality, access, and affordability of the services and coverage we provide.

We advance community health outcomes through intentional, equity-driven program design and targeted investments.

We use our purchasing power to close gaps in access, coverage, and delivery system inequities.

We leverage data, diverse best practices, and proven successes to identify disparities, guide decisions, and improve health outcomes.

We direct resources to agency priorities and strengthen alignment with our core functions to ensure they are effectively supported.

We identify core business needs aligned with agency priorities and use them to guide strategic technology investments.

We prepare our staff to succeed in a dynamic environment and deliver on agency priorities.

HCA 60-0076 EN (09/26)

Why update HCA's purchasing strategy?

- Federal policies (including H.R.1) threaten Washingtonians' eligibility for health coverage.
  - Governor Ferguson signed an executive order on September 3 to help mitigate the impacts on Washington's health care delivery system
- Washingtonians continue to face challenges affording and accessing health care, especially those in need of primary care and behavioral health services.
- HCA is ready to apply its cross-market expertise to evolve and transform Washington's purchasing strategy to improve access, affordability, and quality of health care.

Four focus areas to guide our purchasing

Customer experience and access

- Mitigate insurance coverage loss
- Increase timely access to care
- Support clients to access the right level of behavioral health care
- Streamline client experience to apply for and access benefits

Quality and compliance

- Create shared quality improvement goals and incentives
- Increase accountability for quality outcomes

Provider experience

- Reduce administrative burden
- Identify and address barriers to participating in insurance networks

Cost and affordability

- Slow the rate of health care cost growth
- Increase price transparency

Customer experience and access

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- Mitigate insurance coverage loss
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HCA's three pillars

1. Apple Health (Medicaid)
2. Commercial offerings (PEBB, SEBB, and Cascade Select)
3. Behavioral health and recovery

Example preliminary strategies across HCA's three pillars:

Increase oversight for network adequacy and timely access to care, especially in rural areas

- Implement and enforce statewide access standards
- Implement secret shopper validations of provider networks
- Offer multiple health plan options in all counties
- Align plan offerings to ensure similar choices for all PEBB/SEBB enrollees
- Strengthen rural access to primary care and behavioral health services
- Expand mobile crisis services
- Develop and implement BH-ASO for Tribes
- Implement and expand the Native Hub

Leverage IT innovations to improve enrollment experience

- Create a cross-agency platform for clients to apply for and access benefits
- Support clients to navigate work requirements under H.R. 1
- Modernize IT systems to improve client experience

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Example preliminary strategies across HCA's three pillars

Align and incentivize quality goals

- Use data and partnerships with stakeholders and Community Advisory Councils to identify population health and quality of care concerns
- Reward and/or penalize health plans for performance on a shared set of quality goals
- Require carriers to achieve NCQA Health Outcomes Certification

Pay for quality

- Incentivize MCOs and commercial carriers to pay primary care prospectively to advance team-based care, behavioral health integration, and quality standards
- Incentivize MCOs and commercial carriers to pay behavioral health providers for quality of care and physical health integration
- Facilitate payers and providers to share learnings and best practices about quality improvement efforts
- Reward and/or penalize health plans for collective performance

Improve transparency of health plan quality

- Publish consumer and provider-facing quality report cards
- Publish carriers' primary care spend trends

Provider experience

Provider experience

- Reduce administrative burden
- Identify and address barriers to participating in insurance networks

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Example preliminary strategies across HCA's three pillars

Reduce administrative burden through standardized processes

- Implement new state and federal regulations around prior authorizations
- Align primary care strategy across pillars
- Develop AI use review policies and procedures
- Standardize behavioral health patient assessment criteria across payers (aligning with ASAM requirements)

Address barriers to participating in insurance networks

- Standardize provider credentialing process across insurance carriers
- Support ASOs and MCOs in maturing delegation of behavioral health crisis services

Promote payment transparency and timeliness

- Develop and publish provider payment dashboards
- Implement timely payment legislation

Cost and affordability

Cost and affordability

- Slow the rate of health care cost growth
- Increase price transparency

HCA's three pillars

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Example preliminary strategies across HCA's three pillars

Use procurement efforts to improve competition and spur innovation

- Launch procurement for PEBB/SEBB fully-insured medical plans
- Launch procurement for PEBB/SEBB retiree Medicare plan offers

Leverage policies to promote affordable health care costs across the state

- Launch reference pricing for PEBB/SEBB
- Evolve Cascade Select (Public Option) to support goals of affordability and access
- Collaborate with Health Care Cost Transparency Board efforts to impact costs

Evaluate benchmarks and funding methodologies to ensure appropriate costs

- Improve administrative and other financial benchmarking and metrics across Medicaid MCOs
- Assess and deliver recommendations for BH-ASO funding

We want to hear from you!

- Customer experience and access
- Provider experience
- Quality and compliance
- Cost and affordability

Take the survey!



- HCA wants your feedback about our focus areas and strategies
- Please complete our survey
  - Survey closes **October 30 at midnight**
  - Linked on HCA's website: Our purchasing strategy
  - Survey topics:
    - Focus areas
    - Preliminary strategies
    - Other opportunities for Medicaid, commercial, or behavioral health Care work
    - Staying in touch

Washington State Health Care Authority

Timeline

Early fall 2026

- Open feedback period for the draft agency purchasing strategy

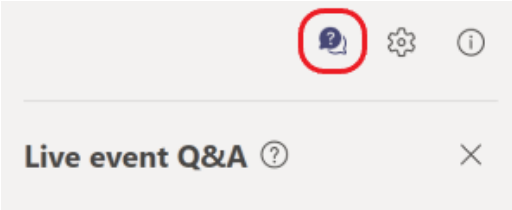
Late fall 2026

- Review and synthesize stakeholder and partner feedback on the draft purchasing strategy

Winter 2026

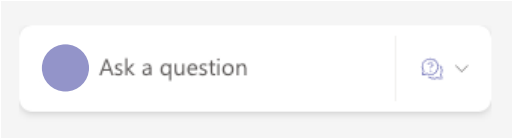
- Present consolidated recommendations to public and legislative leadership

How to use the Q&A



Open the Q&A pane

Click the Q&A icon at the top of the screen to open or close it.



Submit a question

- Select **Ask a question** at the bottom of the pane.
- Type your question in the compose box
- Select **Send**.

What to expect

The wording of your question might change.

We might summarize longer questions. If there are similar questions, we will combine them into one question.

Due to limits on time, not all questions may get answered.

We'll post a Q&A on the Purchasing Strategies webpage after the webinar.

Washington State Health Care Authority



Contact us

- Please email us if you experience any issues submitting your survey
  - PayingforValue@hca.wa.gov

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