Because you are an important health partner in North Central Washington, we are sending you this health care reform update and an invitation on a new way to be involved in health improvement initiatives.

There are different opinions in our area about the state’s health care initiatives, but it is clear that big changes are coming. Our communities need to have the strongest possible voice in these changes, and that is the main point of this work.

Update

The same Leadership Group that worked last year on health care reform in the region is continuing the work this year. The Health Care Authority awarded a planning grant to our region (Okanogan, Grant, Chelan and Douglas Counties) for work in 2015 toward formation of a ***North Central Accountable Community of Health***. An Accountable Community of Health (ACH) is a regional organization that partners with state agencies on health care reform initiatives. An ACH must be a very broadly based community coalition going well beyond traditional care providers. Right now we are working on a governance structure. Soon you will hear more about stakeholder meetings that will continue the work we started last year. The whole point of the effort is to meaningfully engage health stakeholders in shaping the changes about to affect our local health care system. By “health stakeholders” we mean not only health care and behavioral health providers but equally the many others involved in health – social service, government, housing, aging, child care, faith community, schools, public works, public health, consumers, etc.

Invitation

One aspect of our work this year will be the development of two health improvement initiatives. We chose to focus on diabetes because it is common, and because the improved care and prevention of diabetes touches on so many other important health issues such as mental health, whole-person care, the obesity epidemic, etc. It is not the only or the most important health issue. But diabetes is a good place to start.

Two initiatives are planned – one on improvement of diabetes health care, and the other on primary prevention of diabetes in the community.

These initiatives are not meant to revolutionize diabetes care and prevention in one swoop region-wide. They are meant to be small proof-of-concept initiatives that give us a way to get better organized, and provide meaningful opportunities for partners to get involved with positive change. There is limited funding for the initiatives, so we’ll need to build on resources we already have. The idea is to identify methods proven to work in earlier projects, and begin to apply them on a limited basis within our region. (We expect the ACH to foster more ambitious initiatives in the future.) That said, these initiatives are an exciting opportunity for health improvement.

At this point we need to form a planning group for each of the two initiatives. The timeline we’re on calls for developing plans over the next few months, with implementation in the second half of 2015. If you would be interested in being part of the planning group, please [RSVP here](https://docs.google.com/a/communitychoice.us/forms/d/14v2wayDN5_ysCEQnNJPjBFIXW7ZqL_b-j-weoCXKxaQ/viewform).  While the details of this short-term time commitment have not yet been defined, please do let us know your interest or potential interest now. If you have any questions please contact Deb Miller at deb.miller@communitychoice.us or [509-782-5030 X 120](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/).

As this transformation work continues to progress you will be hearing more from us soon about other ways to be an active part of health improvement in our region.

Best regards –

The Leadership Group:

Barry Kling, Chelan-Douglas Health District

Ben Lindekugel, Association of WA Public Hospital Districts

Bruce Buckles, Aging and Adult Care of Central Washington

David Olson, Confluence Health

Gail Goodwin, Grant Integrated Services

Jeff Ketchel, Grant County Health District

Jesus Hernandez, Community Choice

Lauri Jones, Okanogan County Public Health

Nancy Warner, IRIS

Peter Morgan, FQHC Rep