

Community Access Collaboratives: The Whatcom County Story

***“Creating Effective Community Based
Partnerships and Governance”***

Communities Connect Conference
June 3, 2008



A working definition of “Community Access Collaborative”

“A nonprofit organization or local government entity that sponsors a community-based public-private collaborative with the stated purpose of improving health care access for a defined geographic area and target population with an emphasis on active outreach to the uninsured and low-income persons.

The collaborative must demonstrate formal governance accountability to a broad base of health care safety-net providers, school districts, hospitals, and public health and other community-based organizations.” - *School Outreach Bill (SB5100) passed 2008 and focus of HCA Community Collaborative Grant Program implemented 2007.*


Community Access Collaborative Roles

- Neutral Convener
- Organizational Sponsors
- Community Stakeholders



Community involvement from the start

Health Care Summit
November 22, 2002



Does Health Insurance in Whatcom County Ensure Access?



An alliance of Whatcom County community leaders and health care organizations committed to acting locally and advocating regionally to improve health care access

Summit attended by over 200 people including health care providers and patients, and representatives of the governmental, nonprofit and business sectors

Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access

From informal workgroups to non-profit corporation...

Physician Recruitment and Retention

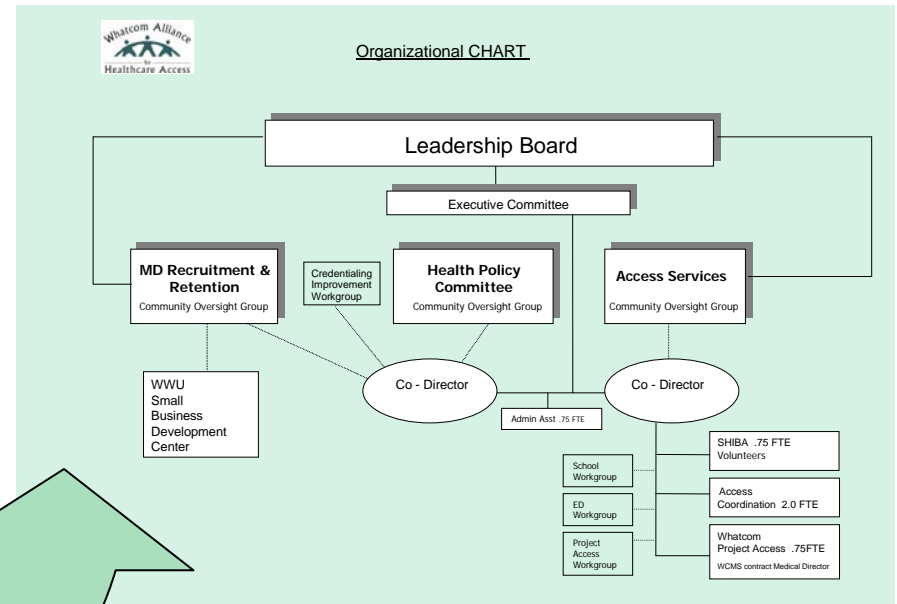
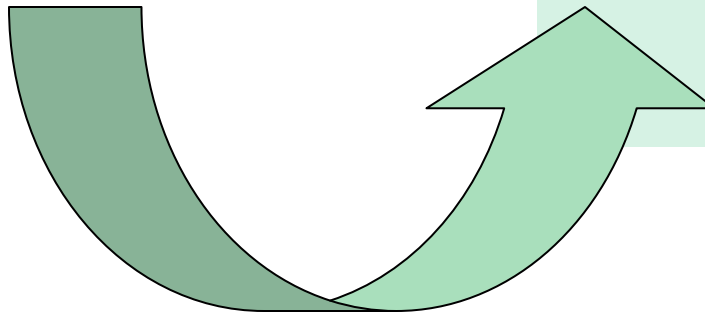
- Community assessments and long term planning
- Collaborative recruitment
- Business consulting services for eligible physician practices
- Credentialing Improvement Group

Health Care Policy Education

- Incentives for private practice involvement in community safety net care
- Small scale pilots with DSHS aimed at reducing admin burden on physician offices

Whatcom Project Access

- Enrollment in public insurance programs
- Access coordination / "medical home" advocacy and follow-up assistance
- Specialty Care Access Network





Whatcom County community leaders and healthcare organizations promoting access to healthcare

Leadership Board

Participant	Organization
Chuck Beard, President	St. Luke's Foundation
Don Rappe, MD, Vice Pres.	Group Health Cooperative
Ralph Hill, Treasurer	Interfaith Community Health Center
Gil Thurston, Secretary	Consumer
Erick Laine, MD	Madrona Medical Group
Regina Delahunt	Whatcom County Health Department
Kathy Lovedahl	Interfaith Coalition
Victoria Doerper	Northwest Regional Council
Stephen Gockley	Northwest Justice Project
Diane Beaman	Ferndale School District
Barbara Finkboner	Lummi Nation Health Center
Kerri Lenderman	Olympic Health Management
Dave Lynch, MD	Family Care Network
Linda McCarthy	Planned Parenthood
Ward Nelson	Whatcom County Council
Marc Pierson, MD	St. Joseph Hospital
Jim Stevens	Unity Group
Tom Stackhouse, MD	Whatcom County Medical Society
Susan Trimmingham	Consumer
Jim Wells	Regence BlueShield
Peggy Zoro	St. Luke's Foundation

- Hospital and private physicians
- Business
- Payers
- Faith Community
- Community and tribal health centers
- Public health department
- Elected Officials
- Area Agency on Aging
- Schools
- Consumers
- Philanthropy

WAHA Objectives

- Connect people to health insurance and care
- Support ongoing private practice involvement in the community safety-net



Incremental improvement *AND* System Overhaul

“Covering the uninsured...is the dominant but unexamined moral frame for those seeking health care reform... I propose that we frame reform in terms of the system, not symptom, along these lines:

Create the system we never built”

John Glaser, STD



Programs & Initiatives



Health Insurance & Care Connection

- Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) HelpLine
- Connection Services (private and public)
- Whatcom Project Access



Physician Recruitment and Retention Services

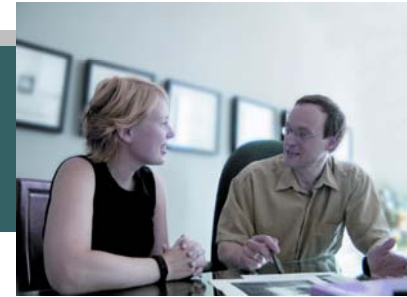
- Ongoing assessment of workforce
- Collaborative recruitment in critical areas
- Business consulting services for small practices



Health Policy Education

- Nonpartisan analysis for decision makers ...Communities Connect
- Convene community leaders, system stakeholders and elected officials

WAHA Connection Services



**Hospital /
ED and PBS**



Schools



**Small
Businesses**



**Medical
Practices**



- Screen for Medicaid and *Basic Health*
- Provide commercial insurance information
- Offer assistance with application paperwork
- Help securing a medical home



www.WhatcomAlliance.org
(360) 715-6594

Looking for Healthcare?

WAHA can help you get health insurance and a doctor.

The Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access (WAHA) is a free and confidential community service.

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¿Busca Servicios de Salud?

WAHA le puede ayudar a conseguir un seguro médico y buscar un doctor.

WAHA es un servicio a la comunidad. Es gratis y confidencial.

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Нуждаетесь в медицинском уходе?

WAHA поможет вам получить медицинскую страховку и найти врача.

The Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access (WAHA) бесплатное и надежное общественное учреждение.

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Healthy Kids are Better Learners



Insurance helps keep kids healthy.

Regular visits to the doctor and early treatment can prevent more serious problems. If you know the bill is paid, it's easier to go to the doctor for check-ups, immunizations, and minor illnesses.



It costs less than you think.

Did you know that a family of four can make \$4,000 per month and still qualify for Medicaid or the *Children's Health Insurance Program*? Nearly half of all children in Whatcom County, most from working families, are covered by one of these health insurances.



Applying is easy.

Call a WAHA at (360) 715-6594 to schedule an appointment or receive more information. Insurance applications are available online at www.WhatcomAlliance.org, and can be done entirely by mail.



Working together for healthy students



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Whatcom Project Access



- Equitably distributes referrals
- Provides nurse to coordinate specialist care w/ CHC
- Provides for ancillary services & affordable Rx
- Collects value of donated care



- Recruits volunteer physicians
- Provides medical oversight

Physician Recruitment and Retention

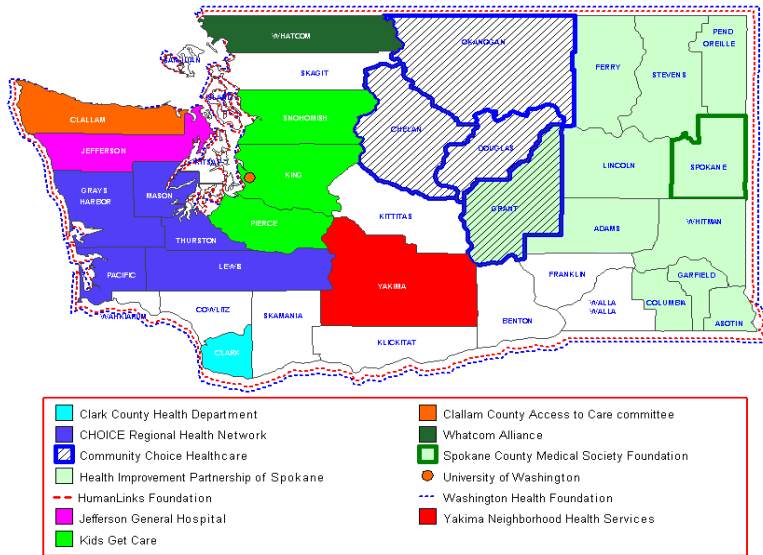


- Community assessments and long term planning
- Collaborative recruiting for critical access physicians (primary care, obstetrics and general surgery)
- Business consulting services for eligible physician practices

Health Policy Education

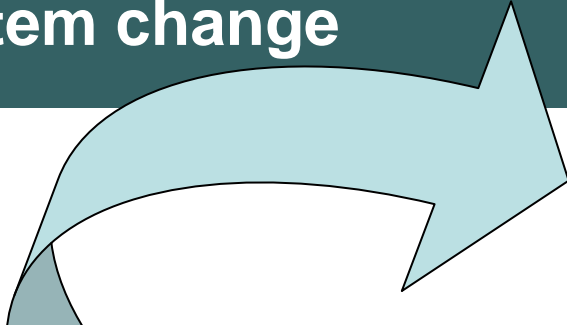


- Provide information for decision makers about legislative impacts in our community
 - Educate the community about policy issues effecting health care access for people in Whatcom County
 - Support implementation of legislation by serving as community resource to state agencies
- Focus on *impacts* of legislation
 - Bipartisan...No position on candidates or ballot initiatives



- Statewide association of community-based access coalitions
- Promotes the sharing of best practices across the state
- Articulate effect of state policies on local access with combined voice of 28 of the 39 counties in Washington State.

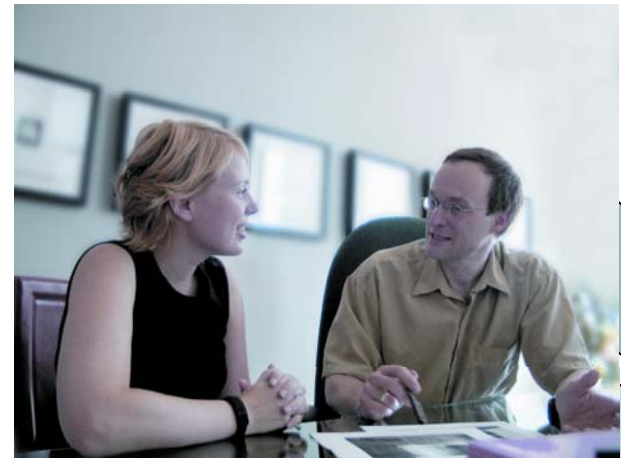
Meeting access needs locally and advocating for system change



“Community Collaboratives like WAHA help us understand unintended consequences of state bills on communities and coordinate the community response to the healthcare policy discussions” **Dem. Legislator**



Accomplishments “on the ground”

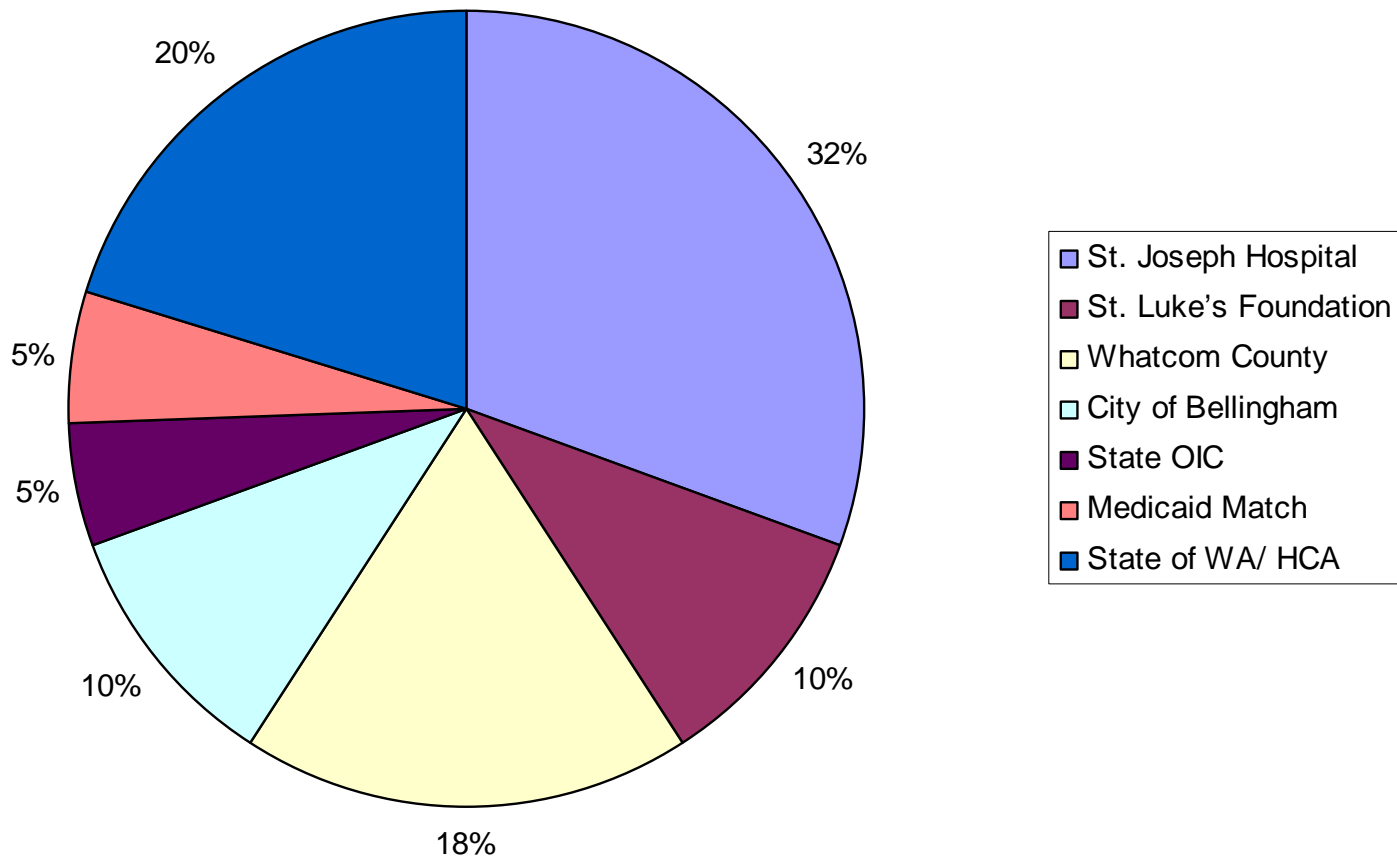


Effect at the policy level

“When its all said and done, what we do is fund things... and solutions to the health care crisis will come from the local level”. **Rep. Senator**



WAHA Revenue 07/08



What makes WAHA work

- Bringing community and providers together
- Creating a community voice
- Community vs. local and state interests
- Communities Connect
- Bi-partisan in spirit and action
- Local funding, local results

WAHA's Commitment: Create "value added" for organizational sponsors

- Standard ROI
- Return on Community Investment
- Adding to community capacity by leveraging and coordinating resources

Hospital

Getting people covered

- 30 people in Q1 received coverage as a direct result of WAHA application assistance
- \$164,229 billed charges/ \$59,327 payments
- Expect \$80,000 (\$320,000 annually)

More timely payments

- Onsite DSHS = 1 day turn-a-round (vs. 30 days)
- WAHA approval rate of 90% vs. pt rate of 60%

A hospital story...

Mom loses children's Medicaid coverage after marrying a self-employed gentleman. 23 month child goes to pediatrician following month of difficulty breathing. PCP medicates and sends to ER to be admitted. Child has RSV and pneumonia. Hospital bill is \$7200 plus PCP charges. Mom gets Medicaid application and WAHA follows up. Helps her finish tax info so DSHS can use net income of business instead of gross income. ***DSHS onsite at WAHA receives tax info, works case, prints retroactive coupon, sends to mom, PCP, and hospital to cover charges.***

Private Physicians

- Assist “safety net” care by assuming admin. hassles associated with Medicaid and other public programs.
- Support services for uninsured patients through Project Access so time and contribution are maximized.
- Recruitment, technical and business support services
- Health policy support that incorporates their issues as part of the community voice.

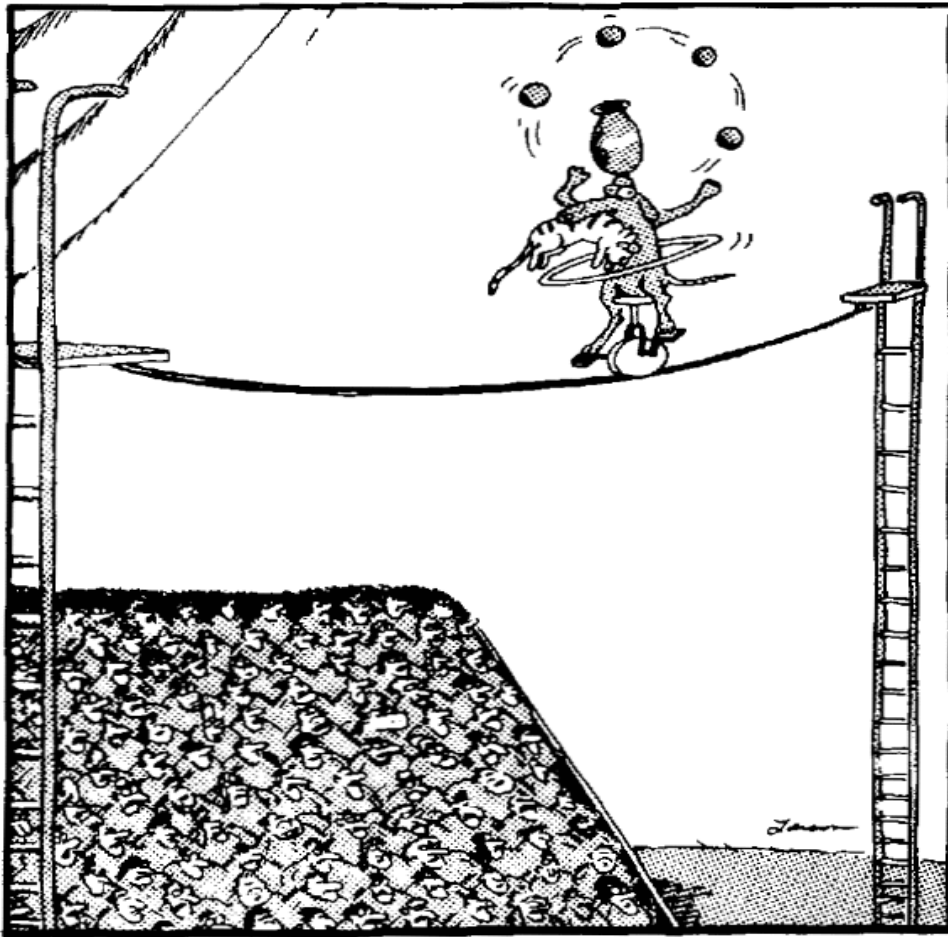
Local Government

- A partner on important community issue without assuming full burden
- Ability to leverage local public health dollars to improve access
- WAHA serves as a collective voice on health issues
- WAHA serves as implementation engine for health improvement initiatives
- A vehicle for government to participate in a public/private partnership

Lessons Learned

- Building at community level (not just the provider level) with neutral convener key to insuring local accountability.
- Broad base of organizational sponsors critical for ongoing support and commitment
- Acting locally while advocating for health policy change addresses immediate needs and system reform
- Every community is different. A focus on doable projects that matter at the local level with partners willing to respond to unique community needs leads to success.
- Involvement of public (CHC's, hospital, LHJ) and private providers key to stabilizing safety net care

The WAHA Story



High above the hushed crowd, Rex tried to remain focused. Still, he couldn't shake one nagging thought: He was an old dog and this was a new trick.



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