

Volunteers

- Krystal Guzman, President from Island Hospital
- Ashely Waldron, Secretary from Family Care Network
- Barb Schlimmer, Treasurer from Odessa Clinic
- Cindy Robertson, Legislative Action Committee Chair (LAC) from North Shore Medical Group
- Renee' Smith, Member at Large from Summit Pacific
- Dawn Bross, Coordinator from Moses Lake
- Katie Jo Raebel, CPA Honorary Board Member from Wipfli
- Lisa McKay, LAC member from North West Pediatrics
- You!

2017 North West Rural Health Conference

The North West Regional Rural Conference was held in SeaTac this year from February 27th to March 1st. The event was again a combined effort bringing together Rural Health Clinics (RHC), Critical Access Hospitals (CAH), Rural Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Rural Home Health. There were 379 attendees of which 102 were identified as team members supporting rural health clinics in Washington. Attendees were asked to indicate their interest during registration and 36% choose rural health clinic information. By combining the conferences, we are able to reach more individuals than we had in our last couple of years in Chelan. Monday was an Intensive Workshop Day and the RHC billing and compliance had the biggest interest with 77 people registered, this number is very close to the total conference participation we had our last year in Chelan.

Conference attendees learned about many topics Accountable Communities of Health, Telehealth, Transformation HUB, How Repeal and Replace works in the Federal budget, Care for the Aging Population, Incident Reporting, Quality, Recruitment, Survey, Billing, Compliance, and Value Based Purchasing. The RHCAW hopes that attendees will be able to draw ideas and potential solutions to their current challenges in their car ride home from the conference.

The conference planning committee is still working out some of the challenges with providing an exceptional conference in new venues. We hope that those who attended will complete their surveys to help the team learn how best to meet the expectations of the attendees. If you have any suggestions or would be willing to share the barriers to why you were unable to participate this year, please reach out to an RHCAW representative. We are expecting to be in Spokane for the 2018 conference, more details to come. We really hope that we will see you and others from your organization at next year's conference.

A Strategy of Consistent Communication

The RHCAW Board realized that we haven't done the best job of communicating what actions we are taking every month on behalf of the association membership. While we have scheduled calls and meeting to advance our work and represent the membership routinely we often feel like nothing news worthy comes from these efforts. We realize that when you are working on complex topics like value based payments, reconciliation, and conference planning that sometimes things move at a snail's pace and then other times we are sending weekly updates. We observed that we are good at getting information out to our list service as decisions and actions are needed, but are not good at keeping membership informed in between.

We plan to setup regular monthly communication that can provide a brief update on what actions the board is taking. We also want to encourage membership to let us know what things they are doing that could help other RHC's to become stronger from their experiences. We plan to include a brief survey (5-10 questions) with each communication to help us learn what is on your mind and what activities are happening at your organization. To make this work we need to make sure that our communications are getting to the correct people. With this communication, we are sending to all our list service in a manner where all contacts will be seen. Please check the list for the people at your organization or others that you think this information would be helpful to and forward the newsletter to them. If they want to be added to the list service, please have them email us at rhcaw@outlook.com. Also, we look forward to your response to our survey and our newsletter topics to help guide us in what we put in future communications.

2017 Membership Invoices with New Fee Schedule

During the next couple of weeks, you will be receiving an invoice from the RHCAW for the 2017 membership. This is our best guess at what your organization should be based on the information that we have from past due payments. We have updated our payment structure to match the way most clinics were doing their calculations (based on the number of full time equivalent providers and not based on providers per site) and tried to keep things simple. If you have any questions, please reach out to a board member and we will help you to understand the new fee structure.

You might be asking yourself what benefit you get from the RHCAW and why we need your continued support.

- *During the last 17 months, we have attended 10 in person meetings with the HCA in Olympia to discuss the Alternative Payment Methodology that is part of the Healthier Washington initiative, each meeting takes multiple hours of preparation.
- *We participated in the Healthier Washington Consortium in October in SeaTac.
- *We have bi-monthly scheduled calls with Gary Swan on Alternative Payment Methodology 4 -APM4 and with Madina Cavendish on the Agreed Upon Process - AUP/reconciliation status.
- *We participated in the Health Innovations Leadership Network- HILN subcommittee building a playbook to help implement Healthier Washington in Rural Areas.
- *We participated in a meeting with the HCA discussing how the MCO denials for participant assignments, especially for afterhours care, and slow credentialing by insurance causes payments to be delayed until the reconciliation process and if systematic solutions can be found.
- *We helped plan and get support for the 2017 North West Rural Health Conference in SeaTac to make sure that RHC's can network and get the time sensitive education needed to keep RHC's in compliance and up to date on new regulations as well as people to share their practical experience.
- *We had our Public Policy Advisors (Jonathan and Patty Seib) focus on getting the funding allocated by the Legislature in 2016 to repay the independent or former independent RHC's auditor cost rolled over so that those funds can still be reimbursed until June 30, 2017.
- *We have worked with the State Office of Rural Health which is part of the Department of Health to get a grant that provides \$50,000 in support for the association.
- *We are working on a strategic plan to grow the leadership and provide better membership communication in the next year.
- *We continue to try to influence State and Federal Legislatures directly and with the help of the Seib's to ensure that our Senators and Representatives are informed on how their choices impact rural health clinics. One of our goals is for those decision makers to keep our needs top of their minds.

Brief Updates:

APM4: April 30, 2017 was the last day to submit a signed MOU to the Health Care Authority. There are many FQHC's and 1 RHC who signed a MOU. Their APM4 payment structure will go into effect 07/01/2017. If you have any questions regarding APM4 you may contact Krystal Guzman at kguzman@islandhospital.org

Legislative update – Jonathan and Patty Seib are working with the legislators to include language in the new budget to encourage MCO to pay full encounter rates at the time of service, this is currently in the House purposed budget.

Conference Planning: Dawn Bross of RHCAW has been named 2018 Conference Manager (CM), Krista Loney from WWAMI-AHEC will be the 2019 CM and Beionka Moore from WRHA will round out the 2018 Leadership Team. We are checking venues in Spokane in June.

AUP/reconciliation update: We recently learned that (52) 41% of the RHC's have completed their reconciliation process for years 2011-2013. This number represents 5 independent clinics, we would like to remind clinics that the auditor reimbursement for non-hospital based funds has to be paid out by June 30, 2017. If you were independent any time during these years please submit your data and for your auditor reimbursement ASAP, time is running out!

RHCAW is working with Gary Swan & Madina Cavendish regarding future reconciliations. Open items include the extensive time, effort, and cost to RHCs for the 2011-2013 AUP process as well as a systematic review of denied claims that are still eligible encounters. On April 21, 2017 the HCA agreed to continue to reconcile to the Fee For Service Equivalency rather than your Actual Payments Received, which they were previously indicating future reconciliations would require. RHCAW is in active discussions with HCA on these concerns and is expecting that an updated AUP documentation will be created as a result.