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Peterson Center on Healthcare Announces a \$1.7 Million Grant to Washington State Health Care Authority to Identify and Address Drivers of Healthcare Cost Growth

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NEW YORK (May 31, 2023)— The Peterson Center on Healthcare today announced a two-year, \$1.7 million grant to the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) to support a new partnership with the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), an independent health research center at the University of Washington.

In Washington and across the U.S., healthcare spending continues to rise unsustainably, putting a strain on individuals, families, state healthcare systems, and government budgets. This partnership will provide policymakers with timely, actionable data and research to improve access to quality, affordable care for Washington residents by supporting analytic capacity and transparency about healthcare costs and outcomes.

Washington State's HCA will use the grant, funded jointly by the Peterson Center on Healthcare and Gates Ventures, to create a new Analytic Support Initiative that will combine in-house expertise in healthcare spending, state data, and policy with world-class analytics capabilities at IHME. This partnership with IHME builds on Washington's efforts to improve healthcare affordability and transparency through the Health Care Cost Transparency Board (Board). The Board is charged with evaluating and making recommendations to the state on ways to reduce healthcare spending. To accomplish these goals, the Board is comprised of state legislators and agencies, representatives for healthcare purchasers, employers, and Washington consumers.

Sue Birch, Director of HCA and Chair of the Health Care Cost Transparency Board, said, "HCA will be working with world-class partners to increase capacity and inform decision-making to improve Washingtonians' access to quality healthcare at a lower cost. This initiative will strengthen the Health Care Cost Transparency Board's efforts to create transparent recommendations based on data."

The Board has already collected its first set of data from insurance carriers about the benchmark for calendar years 2017, 2018, and 2019. This data will help the Board determine how much Washington spends on healthcare and set the baseline for tracking spending growth in future years. Later this year, the Board expects to publicly report Washington spending trends.

The Analytic Support Initiative will provide additional data and evidence for the Health Care Cost Transparency Board to guide the Board's recommendations in addressing healthcare costs.

"Policymakers need better, more actionable data on healthcare utilization, spending, and outcomes to inform decision making. When armed with this information, states are better positioned to improve the performance of their healthcare systems," said Caroline Pearson, Executive Director of the Peterson Center on Healthcare.

"We are thrilled to partner with the HCA in leveraging our team's deep expertise in rigorous analysis of healthcare data towards the goal of improving health outcomes and reducing costs in our home state," said Dr. Christopher Murray, Director of IHME.

This grant builds on prior research by IHME on the drivers of healthcare cost growth, funded by the Peterson Center on Healthcare and Gates Ventures, as well as the Peterson-Milbank Program for Sustainable Health Care Costs that helps states build capacity to set and track health cost growth targets.

"We are excited to bring this additional data and analytic capacity to bear in order to build consensus around drivers of cost and potential solutions to inform progress in Washington," said Dr. Niranjana Bose, Managing Director of Health & Life Sciences at Gates Ventures, the private office of Bill Gates.

Lois Cook, Managing Member, America's Phone Guys and small business representative of the Health Care Cost Transparency Board, said, "As a small business co-owner in Washington state, we have a vested interest in managing rising healthcare costs that have a direct impact on our employees. The Analytics Support Initiative will be an important tool to assist the Board in this effort."

For more information, please visit hca.wa.gov.

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About the Peterson Center on Healthcare

The Peterson Center on Healthcare is a non-profit organization dedicated to making higher quality, more affordable healthcare a reality for all Americans. The organization is working to transform U.S. healthcare into a high-performance system by finding innovative solutions that improve quality and lower costs, and accelerating their adoption on a national scale. Established by the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, the Center collaborates with stakeholders across the healthcare system and engages in grant-making, partnerships, and research.



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