



Whatcom Community Foundation

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Community Foundation Grants \$179,000 to Support Local Healthcare Innovations

The Whatcom Community Foundation awarded three grants totaling \$179,000 to support improvements in the delivery of local primary healthcare services and prevention. The grants were made from the Foundation's MBI Health Innovation Fund (Fund), established to support bold, creative work in the healthcare field.

- Mount Baker Planned Parenthood (MBPP) was awarded \$49,000 in support of its Patient Access-Process Improvement Project. MBPP is participating in Stanford University's d.school training, learning to apply design methodologies to improve the patient experience while increasing efficiencies. The grant will support MBPP staff in collaborating with service providers and patients to understand and implement the ideal patient visit experience.
- Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities (Coalition) received \$30,000 in support of Whatcom ACHIEVE (Action Communities for Health, Innovation and Environmental Change). Whatcom County, through the Coalition in partnership with the Whatcom County Health Department, is one of 43 communities participating in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's collaborative community planning initiative. The goal is to change policies and systems to better support physical activity, good nutrition, and reduce obesity, tobacco use and chronic disease. The award recognizes the powerful effect innovation can have on prevention. It also honors the value of a community "ombudsman," coordinating efforts among a variety of partner organizations.
- Critical Junctures Institute (CJI) received \$100,000 in support of strengthening the medical home model of primary care by improving the health of Whatcom County's complex care patients. CJI is partnering with the Family Care Network (FCN) and the University of Washington's Department of Family Medicine to research FCN's working model to efficiently and effectively manage the needs of patients with multiple chronic conditions. It is estimated that these 10 percent of patients utilize two-thirds of health care resources. The project team's work is particularly impressive given the potential for local as well as national benefit, as expanding the medical home concept in primary care practice is a key feature of health care reform proposals.

The Fund was established in late 2008 with a \$250,000 donation to the Foundation from Mount Baker Imaging (MBI), a partnership between Northwest Radiologists and PeaceHealth. "It's wonderful to be part of a community where these kinds of philanthropic partnerships are possible," said Nancy Steiger, Chief Mission Officer of PeaceHealth's Whatcom Region. Foundation Board Chair Glenn Butler noted, "MBI's gift is an impressive philanthropic leadership move and we're grateful to be a part of it."

The Fund is advised by a committee of individuals from around the region with a breadth of education, experience and professional knowledge appropriate to advise the Fund. Fund Advisors include: **Sandy DeGroot**, RN, MSN, ARNP, U.S. Navy Retired, Bellingham, WA; **George Dyson**, Author and Historian, Bellingham, WA; **Kristen West**, Executive Director, CHOICE Regional Health Network, Olympia, WA; and **Sabrina Wong**, PhD, MSc, BSN, School of Nursing, Core Faculty, Centre for Health Services and Policy Research, University of British Columbia, B.C., Canada.

Fund Advisor, George Dyson, added, "In addition to the exciting work that's being funded, one of the most innovative things about the Fund is that it is healthcare funding without a lot of strings attached." The next grant round will be held in fall 2009 (submission deadline to be announced). For more information regarding the MBI Health Innovation Fund visit <http://www.whatcomcf.org/> or call 360.671.6463.