



## EvergreenHealth Partners Launches First Clinically Integrated Network in the Puget Sound Region

**Kirkland, Wash.** – EvergreenHealth Partners LLC (EHP) announced the creation of the Puget Sound region's first clinically integrated network linking independent physicians and private practices with EvergreenHealth-employed physicians in a network dedicated to improving safety outcomes, lowering overall cost and increasing value.

The network, which includes nearly 500 providers representing more than 80 practices across the Eastside, began offering the network on Jan. 1, 2014, to self-insured organizations including EvergreenHealth, and will be available as a commercial insurance network through Regence BlueShield and other insurance carriers pending state approval.

"Employers in western Washington are struggling to keep pace with the increases in health care costs, and we firmly believe that EHP fulfills a very great need, providing high-quality care through a mechanism that fosters accountability and value," said Paul Buehrens, MD, EvergreenHealth Partners medical director. "For the first time in this area, we've created a way for independent physicians to align with a hospital and its staff to use data to improve patient outcomes and satisfaction, while driving efficiencies in the delivery of care."

Similar to but more flexible than accountable care organizations, the approach to clinical integration has enjoyed success in other parts of the country, with some organizations including thousands of providers and networks of hospitals.

EvergreenHealth Partners brings together independent and hospital-employed providers across the health care continuum to streamline care, increase cost efficiencies and improve access to resources.

Through EHP, providers are able to have a deeper, more patient-focused conversation and to align around quality and cost in a way not achievable in traditional health care models, and not achievable directly by the health plans themselves.

According to EvergreenHealth CEO Bob Malte, EHP providers individually have a track record of being of the highest quality and most cost-effective in the Puget Sound region and have joined to provide the highest-value care to health care purchasers.

"EvergreenHealth is always looking for ways to increase value and quality of care for our patients," said Malte. "EvergreenHealth Partners is a thoughtful and creative way to concurrently improve the quality of care for our patients while addressing the marketplace's demand to maintain cost efficiencies."

While EHP brings clear benefits to both patients and physicians, the network does not keep patients from seeing their provider under traditional health care models – EHP providers continue to have fee-for-service contracts with most insurance plans.



Malte added that there are many advantages for independent physicians to join the network, including the ability to measure and track quality improvements. The network allows a high level of collaboration and financial alignment while providers are able to remain independent.

“As members of EvergreenHealth Partners, independent physicians now have the tools and resources to measure the quality of the care they provide,” Malte noted. “In addition, members of EHP will have access to other tools within the network including care managers, an established and vetted bank of clinical best practices and a connection with other like-minded providers to better coordinate care.”

According to Jonathan Hensley, president of Capital Benefit Services, a health benefits consultancy, EvergreenHealth Partners is at the vanguard of innovation in this region.

“I am quite confident that, over time, we will see other clinically integrated health care delivery models develop in the region, but it is a testament to EvergreenHealth and EvergreenHealth Partners to be the first to deliver,” Hensley said. “This sort of program should resonate extraordinarily well with payers and self-insured companies who are eager to find ways to improve quality while managing cost.”

EvergreenHealth Partners is governed by its 20-member board of managers, which provides guidance, oversight and final decision-making for EvergreenHealth Partners.

“We designed EHP’s governance to allow us to bring together the insights of our providers, administrators and our own elected commissioners, ensuring everyone has a voice in leading EvergreenHealth Partners,” said Kevin Hanson, MD, chair of the board of managers. “In addition, we have a robust group of committees ranging from quality to finance, designed to constantly improve the care we deliver to our patients and the efficiency in which we deliver that care.”

The clinical integration network underscores a commitment to measured quality data, which will eventually be made available to guide patients in selecting providers to meet their health care needs. Providers are incentivized with financial rewards for meeting quality benchmarks, ensuring that treatment decisions are driven by patient care and quality outcomes rather than cost or convenience.

Dr. Buehrens noted that as awareness of EHP grows with health care purchasers, he anticipates that the network of physicians will grow, increasing the depth and breadth of EHP services.

For more information about EvergreenHealth Partners, visit [www.evergreenhealthpartners.org](http://www.evergreenhealthpartners.org).

### ***About EvergreenHealth***

*EvergreenHealth is an integrated health care system that serves nearly 850,000 residents in King and Snohomish counties. Formed as a public hospital district in 1972, EvergreenHealth is now a 318-bed acute care hospital and health system located in Kirkland and includes 24-hour Level III trauma emergency and critical care. EvergreenHealth also provides primary, urgent, specialty and 24/7 emergency care at its EvergreenHealth Medical Center in Redmond and operates nine primary care clinics, an additional urgent care center in Woodinville and a senior clinic. More than 950 physicians on EvergreenHealth’s medical staff provide clinical excellence within more than 70 specialties, including cardiac, surgical, orthopedic, cancer, neurological, neonatal, hospice, pulmonary, sleep, and home-health care. In addition to clinical care, EvergreenHealth offers extensive community health*

*outreach and education programs, anchored by the 24/7 EvergreenHealth Nurse Navigator & Healthline. EvergreenHealth is partners with Virginia Mason Medical Center and the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance. For more information, visit [www.evergreenhealth.com](http://www.evergreenhealth.com).*

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