



Health Improvement Partnership
Committed to your dreams for a healthy community.

Overview of HIP

The Health Improvement Partnership (HIP) is 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a mission to facilitate and enhance community well being.

Guiding Principles: HIP believes that it is possible to build a vibrantly healthy community by trusting people's inherent interest in improving their world and by inviting them to work together in pursuit of their dreams. One of HIP's roles in this belief is to catalyze community health by acting as a neutral convener. In our commitment to creative collaboration, we are consistently inviting dialogue and action among diverse players who can work together to solve community problems that could not be solved by a single entity's effort.

In its role as a catalyst for building a healthy community, HIP:

- Continually asks What If...?--and promote new ways to awaken our community's commitment to self improvement;
- Strengthens others' capacity to do their work;
- Acts as a neutral convener, committed to creative collaboration, continually inviting diverse players together to enact shared visions;
- Identifies and pursues strategic opportunities in strengthening community life;
- Secures new resources to fuel collaborative innovation
- Honors people's differences as they seek to unfold unifying plans;
- Cultivates honest, respectful relationships with all individuals and groups we encounter;
- Educates and influences without exerting or seeking positional authority;
- Maintains a primary service commitment to our home community--the Spokane regional community
- Remains open to all dimensions of potential community improvement, including (but not limited to) poverty; violence; return-to-work training; access to healthcare; quality, affordable child care; access for people with disabilities; environmental issues; elder issues; etc

History: Faced with rising health care costs in the early 1990s, Spokane County's four major hospitals worked with the Spokane Regional Health District, to begin an initiative to improve overall community health and well being, not only in prevention and treatment of illness, but in areas they saw as interrelated and crucial to the community's wellness, such as education, childcare, economic development, and safety. Recognizing that they could not invest this broadly in community development without the partnership of the community itself, they convened a yearlong planning process that involved the leaders of more than seventy organizations from all sectors of community life. From this year of planning in 1995, HIP was born.

Current Initiative Areas

HIP coordinates community initiatives and other projects in the following areas:

Spokane Regional Child Care Initiative (SRCCI): A collaboration of over 100 individuals and organizations united to improve the quality of child care in the Spokane region of Eastern Washington. SRCCI pursues strategies for improving profitability of child care business, improving access to child care for people of all incomes and backgrounds, and encouraging enrollment of more children from all incomes and backgrounds into quality early learning programs.

Project CONNECT: An initiative to build capacity within Spokane to make all aspects of community life accessible for individuals living with a disability. Project CONNECT works through smaller projects such as DASH (Disability Awareness, Surveillance, and Health Promotion), Measuring Community Accessibility, and Plan to Work, to achieve improvements in community accessibility.

Economic/Workforce Development: This initiative is realized through the work of the Spokane Works project. Spokane Works brings together community resources: agencies, organizations and employers to offer a support system for individuals moving from welfare to work, their families, children and non-custodial parents. HIP's role is to create and sustain cross-sector partnerships within Spokane County that work to support not only the participants but also the service providers.

Healthcare Access Initiative: This initiative coordinates a variety of collaborative projects with the goal of increasing access to health care for Eastern Washington's uninsured. See next section for more information.

Healthcare Access Initiative

For five years, an Eastern Washington coalition organized by the Spokane, Washington-based Health Improvement Partnership (HIP) has been organizing an improved regional healthcare access system. Finding the existing system full of gaps and instabilities that leave many people without access to timely, affordable healthcare, it has partnered with over 200 regional healthcare organizations. HIP's goal, which echoes its organizational values statements, has been to act as a *neutral convener*, a *catalyst*, and to *strengthen others' capacity to do their work*. In other words, HIP has been fostering the efficiency and coordination – and, in some arenas, the *development* – of a regional healthcare delivery system that reaches toward 100% access / zero disparities.

The results so far include more than 31,000 individual contacts with uninsured/underserved citizens across an eleven-county Eastern Washington region – via HIP's new Health for All (HFA) information, referral, and enrollment service. More than 17,000 previously uninsured people have been enrolled on affordable, sustainable health care coverage through these efforts.

Key Elements of the Healthcare Access Initiative:

- *Health for All:* Program to enroll uninsured and underinsured into available health care options (state insurance programs such as Medicaid and Basic Health, other insurance options; affordable primary, preventive and specialty care; resource and referral information); Targeted outreach for underrepresented populations via Multi-Cultural Outreach Workers; Health for All's *Advocate* also provides care coordination services for individuals with chronic disease or multiple access barriers.
- *Strategies for the Employed Uninsured:* Solutions to increase access for the working uninsured (75% of Spokane's uninsured are employed) including: A public/private campaign at the state level to allow the blending of private dollars from small employers with public dollars from the Washington State Basic Health Plan (BH) for the development of an affordable new "Expanded Choice" coverage; A partnership with the Spokane Regional Child Care Initiative to offer new health care access options to child care industry employers, employees and the families they serve.
- *Coordination and Integration of the Existing Community Health System Providers and Services:* Development of new referral protocols between hospital emergency departments and community health centers for high-risk uninsured seeking primary care in the hospital emergency departments without a regular doctor; System infrastructure development to increase the capacity of Community Health Centers and other safety net providers to provide quality healthcare to the uninsured; Implementation of primary care and behavioral health co-location project at Spokane Falls Family Clinic.

Healthcare Access Initiative Community Involvement

Through funding from a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Communities in Charge grant, HIP convened individuals representing over 200 organizations in various coalitions, committees and focus groups in 2000 to design a community-driven, coordinated system of care for Eastern Washington's uninsured that would begin implementation in 2001. Representatives from all sectors of the health care system (safety net providers, hospitals, other providers, health plans, public health and local and state health care policy makers) came together in the design and implementation processes. HIP also sought input and participation from non-traditional health care access stakeholders such as employers, social services, advocates, insurance brokers, state policy makers, and other community groups. HIP also partnered with other communities across Washington State also working toward 100% Access/Zero Disparities on policy strategies that would empower local solutions to improved access.

Today the Healthcare Access Initiative continues to be driven by collaboration. This involves ongoing input and guidance from an Advisory Committee for the overall project, and targeted advisory bodies for specific project elements such as Expanded Choice. It also involves ongoing needs assessment and input from uninsured and underinsured consumers via HIP's Health for All program which communicates daily with individuals seeking access in urban and rural regions of Eastern Washington.