



Celebrating Group Health



Trailblazers in transforming health care for 70 years



In the 1940s, our founders envisioned a new kind of health care with prepaid medical coverage that was accessible and affordable. A group practice where family physicians and specialists coordinated care and shared knowledge. An organization governed by consumers where members had a say in the decisions affecting their care. What they began 70 years ago has become one of America's oldest and most respected health care organizations.



Daring to challenge the status quo

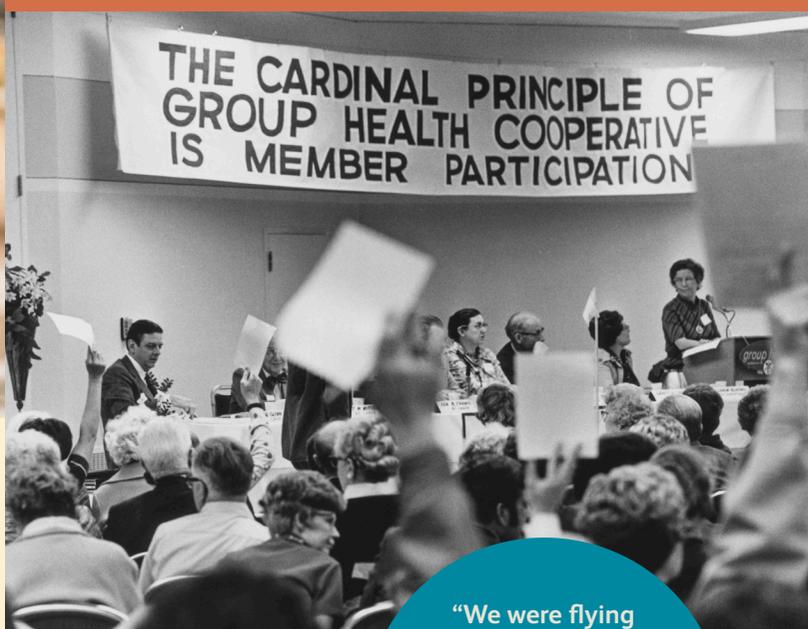
Both prepaid coverage and a group medical practice were considered radical ideas in the 1940s and 50s, and our founders weathered skeptics and smear campaigns in those early years. In fact, King County Medical Society refused to accredit Group Health doctors, so physicians couldn't purchase malpractice insurance anywhere in the United States. (They finally received coverage through Lloyd's of London.)

But our earliest members refused to give up, and their optimism and determination—carried on by those who followed in their footsteps—led to progressive ideas and innovations to improve the way health care is delivered.

- ↑ Founders meet in the mid-1940s to plan Group Health's marketing strategy.
- ↓ Volunteers have been essential throughout Group Health's past and will continue to be important in the future.



- ↓ Annual membership meetings like this one in the 1970s drew passionate debate on key issues of the times, including women's reproductive rights.



Shaped by member participation

Since Day 1, Group Health members have given their time, energy, ideas, and commitment in pursuit of affordable, quality health care and coverage.

From serving on Senior Caucus committees or volunteering with our Resource Line to voting in our elections and attending annual meetings, members are the power and spirit behind our organization.

"We were flying by the seat of our pants most of the time. There was really no example that could be copied."

—Hilde Birnbaum, early trustee

“I remember that after we had been going for 7 years, our net margin was \$7,000. Now that was really nonprofit.”

—Aubrey Davis,
early trustee



Our 60 specialties and subspecialties range from radiation oncologists like Alvin Cabrera, MD, to allergists and orthopedic surgeons.



Getting children vaccinated was a priority when the Salk polio vaccine became available in the mid-1950s.



At the forefront of research

Transforming health care through practical research has always been part of Group Health’s vision. We’re a national leader in research on breast cancer screening, chronic disease management, smoking cessation, and healthy aging—research that makes health care more effective and efficient. We’re also a key player in transforming the U.S. health care system and helping shape clinical guidelines, coverage standards, and global research priorities.

Improving health in our communities

Protecting children from diseases such as polio, chickenpox, whooping cough, and cancer by improving vaccination rates. Providing care to underserved communities. Promoting healthy lifestyles through community programs and events like our Teddy Bear Clinics to help young kids overcome fear of doctor visits. For 70 years we’ve been diligently working to improve the health and well-being of members and neighbors alike.



A 2005 Group Health study helped prove that yoga can improve back pain.





1945–2016: Trailblazers in transforming health care



1945

Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound incorporates.

1947

Group Health's first babies were born (pictured with nurse Elise Cook and pediatrician Sandy MacColl, MD).



1955

Our caution with offering the new Salk polio vaccine proved lifesaving when some of the first vials were defective.



1960

The value of combined medical care and coverage is promoted as the new Central Hospital in Seattle prepares to open.

1940 ENROLLMENT: 16,000

1950 ENROLLMENT: 54,000

1960 ENROLLMENT: 122,000



1946

Group Health's first physician team, acquired through the purchase of the Medical Security Clinic, is onboard.

Group Health begins offering patient care.



1951

State Supreme Court rules unanimously in favor of Group Health and orders King County Medical Society to cease "monopolistic" practices.



Bonds are sold to finance the completion of clinic construction.



1966

Membership agreement amended to offer Medicare participants coverage for \$6 per month.



1969

Family Practice Residency established.

Dr. Bernice Sachs leads Group Health to be the first to offer mental health coverage in Washington state.



1946

Co-op Board approves purchase of Medical Security Clinic and St. Luke's Hospital for \$200,000, pledging their personal credit for part of the down payment.

1958

Neighborhood clinics now open in Northgate (pictured above), Renton, and Capitol Hill.

1969

Clinic now open in downtown Seattle. Renton (pictured above) and Northgate clinics have been updated.

1970

Consulting Nurse helpline is first in the nation—organized by Mary Matsuda Gruenewald.



1983

The Senior Caucus, the Center for Health Studies (later renamed Group Health Research Institute), and the Group Health Foundation are established.

Purchase of a health plan in Spokane results in Group Health of Spokane, an affiliate nonprofit corporation later renamed Group Health Northwest.

1988

Resource Line opens.



1970

 ENROLLMENT: 255,000

1980

 ENROLLMENT: 373,000

1971

Members reject restrictions on abortion.



1973

Women's Caucus, championed by trustee Caroline MacColl, is founded.

1985

Members reject resolution from anti-abortionist activists to ban abortions.



1986

Group Health extends coverage to heart transplants.



1989

Nurses strike for five weeks, the longest strike in the organization's history.



1975

Clinics now open in Federal Way, Lynnwood (pictured above), and Olympia.



1977

Eastside Hospital and Specialty Center opens.



1988

Clinics now open in Bothell, Everett (later remodel pictured above), Factoria, Rainier Valley, Silverdale, and South Tacoma.

1990

First point-of-service (POS) plans offered by Group Health become effective.

Group Health Options, Inc. incorporated as a wholly owned subsidiary of Group Health Cooperative.



1993

Group Health and Virginia Mason Medical Center form strategic alliance. Affiliation agreement canceled in 1995.

1998

Group Health doctors form a for-profit professional corporation, Group Health Permanente, PC, now known as Group Health Physicians.

First Living Well workshop held.



2000

Group Health launches new clinical information system, focused around online services for members.



GroupHealth

2004

First sale as third-party administrator to self-funded group.



1990

ENROLLMENT: 587,000

2000

ENROLLMENT: 594,000

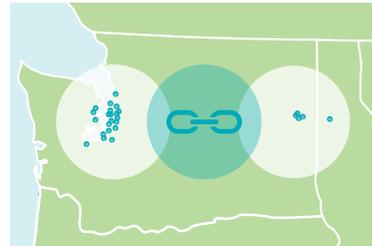


1991

Transportation Assistance Program begins.

1997

Members approve Kaiser Permanente affiliation through jointly owned nonprofit organization. Affiliation only lasts a few years.



1999

Group Health Northwest integrated with Western Washington operations.

Losses top \$60 million. We end service in 13 counties, curtail Basic Health enrollments, raise Medicare rates, and exit individual and family market.

2005

KPS Health Plans in Kitsap acquired. It remains KPS until it's absorbed into Group Health in 2015.

First preferred provider organization (PPO) plan is introduced as a pilot in Spokane.



1992

Tacoma Specialty Center opens.



1994

Capitol Hill Campus in Seattle opens.



2007

New headquarters in Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood opens.

2008

Board updates non-discrimination policy to include “gender identity and expression.”

Partnership with group practice, research institute, and the foundation leads to 5-year, \$1.5 million Partnership for Innovation to bring patient-centered staff ideas to life.



2010

Roughly two-thirds of members receive care at Group Health Medical Centers.

2012

Group Health leaves Medicaid market and becomes provider with Molina Medicaid Solutions.

Together with Providence Healthcare in Spokane, we form an accountable care organization (ACO) called CareUnity.

To become more affordable, goal set to reduce operating costs by \$250 million by end of 2013.

2014

First statewide preferred provider organization (PPO) offered.

First CareClinics open in Bartell Drugs located in Seattle area.



2016

After opportunities to voice their opinions about the proposed acquisition by Kaiser Permanente, members vote in favor of the proposal.



2010

ENROLLMENT: 626,000

2009

Medical home model of care implemented systemwide following successful two-year pilot evaluated by Group Health Research Institute.



2011

App launched for iPhones and Android, enabling mobile access to online services.

2013

Health plans offered for the first time on the new Washington Healthplanfinder, the state’s online exchange.

2015

Proposed acquisition by Kaiser Permanente.

Online diagnosis and treatment service for routine conditions that don’t require an exam goes live.

Group Health’s hospital services, including maternity care, move to Swedish.



2017 and beyond

Continuing to invest in the communities we serve.



Group Health acquires Columbia Medical Associates (CMA) in Spokane. CMA name is retained.



2008

New multispecialty center opens in Bellevue. Group Health Eastside Hospital in Redmond closes.

New clinics open in Spokane’s South Hill neighborhood and Redmond at River Park.

2012

New Puyallup Medical Center opens.

2017

New Burien Medical Center is scheduled to open.