

NEWS FROM



NoHLA - OneAmerica Report Urges Consumer Reforms at Yakima Regional and Toppenish Hospitals



[Yakima Regional and Toppenish Hospitals Fail to Provide Sufficient Charity Care](#), a new report released by NoHLA and OneAmerica, calls for both hospitals to do a better job of ensuring that lower income patients who qualify for charity care actually receive it.

The report features a study of the hospital levels of charity care provided to low-income patients. Washington requires all hospitals to provide charity care, but Yakima Regional and Toppenish have not been doing their fair share. The study found that although Yakima Regional is the most profitable hospital in

Central Washington, it provides a significantly lower level of charity care than the regional average.

Yakima Regional and Toppenish hospitals are owned by for-profit Community Health Systems based in Franklin, Tennessee. They are currently up for sale to an as-yet-undisclosed buyer. The report recommends changes before the sale takes place.

[More Information](#)

Come to NoHLA's annual CLE Seminar: November 18th

On November 18, NoHLA will host its annual Continuing Legal Education seminar. This year's theme is "**Health Care Transformation: Pursuing Equity & Value.**" Session topics will include:

- The Affordable Care Act: Unfinished Business and New Directions
- Value Based Purchasing initiatives: Challenges and Opportunities
- Medicaid managed care: Integrating Behavioral Health
- Health Care Rights and Protections under the New ACA Section 1557 Regulations
- Shaping Washington's "Accountable Communities of Health:" Potential Successes and Pitfalls.

This seminar is suitable for lawyers (CLE credit application pending), policy advocates, health care providers and administrators, and others interested in getting in-depth information about current issues in health care access. Watch for more information on [NoHLA's website](#).

Coverage of Prescribed Prenatal Vitamins Maintained for Pregnant Women



NoHLA is happy to report that in response to our concerns, the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) will retain coverage for prenatal vitamins prescribed to pregnant women on the Medicaid program. HCA had proposed to stop covering vitamins unless there was clinical documentation of a deficiency. In our comments, we noted that prenatal vitamins may be recommended based on factors other than "clinical" or medical ones including for at risk populations such as adolescents, and strict vegetarians or vegans. In addition, it was unclear how a provider would provide such clinical documentation for pregnant women. As a result of our comments, the HCA agreed to not restrict this vital coverage, allowing pregnant women to continue to have access to prescribed prenatal vitamins.

Recommendations to Promote Health Equity

Washington State's Accountable Communities of Health (ACHs) offer a welcome opportunity to combat health disparities in communities across the state. These disparities disproportionately affect racial and ethnic minorities, as well as other populations: persons with low-income, older adults, LGBTQ individuals, and persons with disabilities. State and local governments in Washington are already proposing and using formal decision-making procedures to assess and address racial and other inequities when they make significant policy decisions. Some of the more prominent examples of these tools/procedures are [health impact reviews](#) conducted by the State Board of Health on proposed policy and budget changes, the City of Seattle's [Racial Equity Toolkit](#), and King County's [Equity Impact Review Tool](#).

NoHLA recently issued a [paper on promising practices for consumer engagement in the ACH system](#) in which we recommend that ACHs use a racial equity tool or similar set of priorities and procedures when making significant decisions, adopting policies, and selecting projects. To give policymakers a better idea of how this might work for ACHs, we have adapted Seattle's Racial Equity Toolkit for more targeted use by ACHs when making social and health system decisions; this sample toolkit may be downloaded [here](#). We are in discussions with King County ACH staff and look forward to engaging with other ACHs to promote the use of equity tools like this one to help ACHs promote equity in their work to improve community health.

Farewell to Elisabeth Smith



Earlier this summer, we said farewell to Staff Attorney Elisabeth Smith. We're so grateful to Elisabeth for her groundbreaking work to improve access to health care for formerly incarcerated individuals, and her stellar advocacy to improve reproductive and women's health access in Washington. Elisabeth has moved to the ACLU of Washington as Legislative Director.

We Have a New Website!

NoHLA has achieved its dream of a new, easier-to-use website. [Check it out!](#) We were lucky to have the visual and technical help from Parsons School of Design student (now graduate) Ava Burke, provided through the Ms. Foundation. Eli McClintock-Shapiro got the site up and going. This effort has been ably managed by NoHLA Administrative Coordinator and Webguru Hafoc Yates.

We are still making improvements in the website and would appreciate your feedback. Email hafoc@nohla.org.



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