



GroupHealth®



# Embracing health together

# We are joined together

**FOR 70 YEARS** Group Health Cooperative has been enriching people's lives by providing outstanding, affordable health care and coverage, and by supporting healthy lives—both for our members and people across the communities we serve.

In 2013, we conducted a comprehensive community health needs assessment and identified three key strategies for making a significant difference in the community:

- **Expanding access to care**
- **Promoting active living and healthy eating**
- **Preventing and managing diabetes and cardiovascular disease**

In 2014, we made major strides in each of those strategic areas, and in 2015 we invested even more deeply in them.

At Group Health, it is our promise and our mission to do all that we can to foster a healthier Washington state.

## CONTENTS

- 3** Expanding access to care →
- 5** Promoting active living and healthy eating →
- 8** Preventing and managing diabetes and cardiovascular disease →
- 11** Big data in research →
- 12** Straight talk about vaccines →
- 15** 2015 Group Health snapshot →

## Expanding access to care

### Providing a safety net for families in need

For many families living from paycheck to paycheck, health care competes with many other priorities. Affording health insurance or doctor's visits can be a real challenge. It's part of Group Health's mission to make sure all people have an affordable care option.

In 2015 we cared for 31,000 members on Medicaid—the federal program to protect our state's most vulnerable and low-income residents. We provided our members with a medical home at an unreimbursed expense of \$31.5 million, and offered financial assistance totaling \$1.48 million toward their health care costs.

### Training tomorrow's primary care doctors

Having a personal physician helps people live longer and stay healthier. Communities with more primary care providers report lower death rates for cancer, heart disease, and stroke, plus fewer hospitalizations. Health care costs are lower too.

But the United States is facing a physician shortage of up to 31,000 primary care doctors by 2025. We must train more providers and teach clinical teams to work more collaboratively on behalf of their patients.

Group Health was one of the first of 11 family medicine residencies in the nation, and we continue to prepare the next generation of professionals. Our residents practice in real-world clinics with rotations in surgery, obstetrics, and pediatrics, but they also gain experience in population management, health care team leadership, and community-based chronic care skills—essential skills as health care continues to evolve.

Residents also practice in Group Health's Teen Parenting and Pregnancy Clinic, a unique place that serves pregnant and parenting teens and their children. The clinic has been recognized nationally for its high-quality care, resulting in fewer premature deliveries, low-birthweight newborns, cesarean sections, and repeat pregnancies.

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Within Group Health we get ample training across settings including geriatric care, which is probably the biggest demographic shift happening in our country. I'm confident I'll finish my training with comfort providing care to people of all ages and to an increasingly multicultural nation.

Matthew Mackey, medical resident

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This year Group Health cared for the underserved by sending an attending physician and residents to round in community settings. Residents treated patients in diverse settings including YouthCare—which serves homeless youth—and at health centers in Seattle’s public schools.

Group Health also supported residencies in nursing, pharmacy, and optometry, and trained student interns in our Physical and Occupational Therapy and Speech, Language, and Learning Services departments.



People of all ages came to get care at the Seattle/King County Clinic.

## Giving back at Seattle’s stadium-size clinic

FOUR DAYS, 4,000 PATIENTS, ZERO BARRIERS TO ENTRY. That was the goal of the 2015 Seattle/King County Clinic, a massive clinic offering free medical, dental, and vision care to low-income residents. Group Health was one of 110 partners that provided \$3.7 million worth of direct care at zero cost to patients.

Some 150 Group Health staff donated their time to the event at Seattle Center’s KeyArena. Nearly 30 volunteers from Laboratory Services ran 1,500 lab tests. Eye Care volunteers helped provide free eye exams and prescriptions for eyeglasses.

And the Group Health Foundation stepped forward to ensure that more than 1,000 people received flu vaccines through its Childhood Immunization Initiative.

Overall Group Health donated \$25,000 in medical supplies and \$125,000 in lab services.

Among the 4,010 people who attended, one patient was an older woman living with diabetes who recognized her vision was faltering. “I am on a fixed income and I didn’t want to spend money on glasses when I needed to eat,” she said. She was thrilled to learn the clinic would provide free glasses.

“If this clinic had not come along, I would not be reading when I go home tonight. It’s nice to be valued,” she added.

That was precisely the clinic’s goal, says Seattle Center Director Robert Nellams. “It honors people in a respectful manner who may not have been respected before—and that says something about our community and who we are.”

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Robert Nellams  
Seattle Center director

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Photos by Auston James



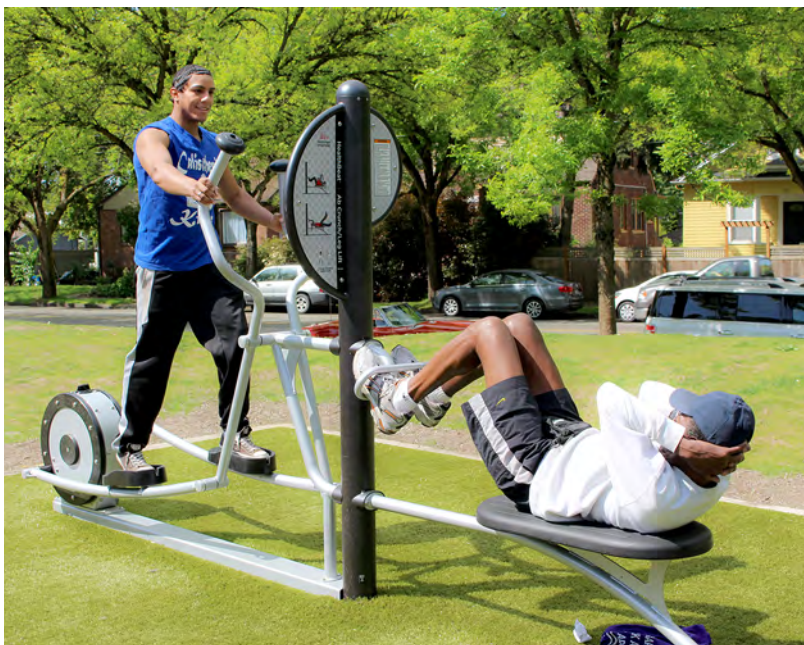
# Promoting active living and healthy eating

## Zoning in on fitness

Exercise takes motivation, often starting at the gym. But to many families throughout Seattle, a gym is too far and too expensive.

The Trust for Public Land began piloting a new Fitness Zone® program in four neighborhoods so that people could exercise closer to home. Using geographic-mapping technology they zeroed in on dense, lower-income areas where residents report high rates of chronic disease

and installed free, durable, outdoor gym equipment in nearby parks.



“Group Health closed out our final fundraising gap of \$25,000 for our location at Van Asselt Community Center on Beacon Hill,” says Beth Hintz, institutional giving manager at the Trust for Public Land. “Once we’ve completed our four sites, no less than 20,000 people—nearly half from low-income households—will live within a 10-minute walk of these Fitness Zone areas.”

The equipment is a fun and social way for teens and adults to get in shape, at all levels of fitness. Research shows that even a modest investment in close-to-home parks can promote exercise and health.

New Fitness Zone equipment at Powell Barnett Park in Seattle. The gym at Van Asselt Community Center opens in 2016.

Fitness zones can also support doctors who are increasingly prescribing exercise to their patients. Group Health operates a medical center a mile away from the Van Asselt location.

“Nationwide, more doctors are prescribing park visits to patients. Now they can direct people to a list of Seattle parks with our equipment,” adds Hintz.

Other program partners include MOMentum, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and the Seattle Parks Foundation.

New Fitness Zones in four sites will serve

**20,000  
PEOPLE**

living within a 10-minute walk of the locations



Major Taylor participant Dashawn Hutchinson riding in the STP.

## Cruising down the road

For young people who live in urban settings, a bike ride can be a journey to freedom: A chance to roam while enjoying the healthy endorphins of exercise.

The Major Taylor Project of the Cascade Bicycle Club introduces youth from diverse backgrounds to recreational cycling. It uses the bicycle to help middle and high school students expand their worldview, empowering them to explore what they might change in themselves and in their health.

As a longtime sponsor of Cascade’s programs, Group Health funded the Major Taylor Project’s expansion into five additional schools in Tacoma. Today the program operates in 11 schools where youth speak 70 languages. In 2015, nearly 330 kids rode 47,490 miles—an increase in the number of riders by 33 percent.

The program also builds fitness and leadership skills: Students who reported getting regular exercise at the start of the program upped their average weekly routine from 60 to 105 minutes. Graduates from the program are often hired back as weekly ride leaders.

The program is active in Burien, Delridge, SeaTac, Seattle, Tacoma, Tukwila, and White Center.

## Fitting in

Group Health also distributed more than 3,000 bicycle helmets across Washington state at the YMCA’s annual Healthy Kids Day.

Volunteers from our Burien, Kitsap, Olympia, and Puyallup locations outfitted kids with free bike helmets and health information at four events, while members of Team Group Health—our sponsored women’s cycling team—assisted at other sites. Overall we supported 27 locations this year.

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The Major Taylor Project will celebrate 10 years in 2017. Group Health Cooperative has been a valued and committed partner in every mile and with each pedal stroke.

Ed Ewing  
Major Taylor Project director

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Free bike helmets and free fittings help keep kids safe.

## Acquiring a taste for healthy cooking

Today, one in three American children and teens is overweight or obese. Kids Cook With Heart is a program of the American Heart Association that combines cooking, nutrition, and health information in a hands-on class for young people.



Healthy meals were on the menu at Kids Cook With Heart.

This year Group Health committed more than \$50,000 to support the program at 10 schools in the Puget Sound area, from Lynnwood to Kent. Students learned about heart-healthy ingredients while preparing family-friendly dishes.

Research shows if children and teenagers are exposed to cooking and eating a variety of foods, they eat more healthfully and take more control over what they consume.

Thirty children took the class at Lake Grove Elementary School in Federal Way. One student

wrote, “It feels nice to cook. It’s fun and I don’t have much experience but...I can’t be going to restaurants every day.”

## Adults get to dish too

Group Health also partnered with Tacoma Metro Parks to sponsor quarterly cooking classes taught by local chefs at the city’s Star Center.

Dawn Wilson, a registered dietitian, opens each class with a different nutrition focus. “I have fielded a diverse group of questions from class participants. We focus on seasonal menus and recipe modifications—from summer salads to holiday dinners,” says Wilson.

One woman with late-stage kidney disease wanted to know how she could improve her diet. Others have asked for recommendations on sweeteners, fats, or salt substitutes in meal preparation.

The classes are free and open to the public.



Cooking students at Tacoma’s Star Center

“

It feels nice to cook. It’s fun and I don’t have much experience but...I can’t be going to restaurants every day.

Cooking student  
Lake Grove Elementary School

”



# Preventing and managing diabetes and cardiovascular disease

## Helping Northwest doctors improve heart care—and their practices

Here in the Northwest, death rates from strokes are higher than in other parts of the United States. Heart disease remains the nation’s leading cause of death.



Healthy Hearts Northwest is aligned with a national effort to prevent **1,000,000** heart attacks and strokes by 2017

In 2015, Group Health Research Institute (GHRI) was awarded a grant by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to help smaller primary care practices in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon better manage their patients’ risk of heart disease. The program—entitled Healthy Hearts Northwest: Improving Practice Together—is part of the federal EvidenceNOW initiative aligned with a national effort to prevent a million heart attacks and strokes by 2017.

Small and mid-sized primary care practices provide the bulk of health care to Americans. One in three Americans has high blood pressure—a major risk factor for heart disease—but almost half aren’t getting treatment for it and may not realize they have it.

Healthy Hearts Northwest will support more than 200 practices in managing their patients’ risk through appropriate aspirin use, blood pressure and cholesterol control, and quitting smoking. For 15 months, practice coaches will help primary care teams learn how to optimize their electronic health records (EHRs) and deepen their quality-improvement skills. Some practices will receive extra support through educational outreach visits to clinicians and an opportunity to tour another practice and learn from their colleagues.

“Our goal is to learn how to best support smaller practices in their effort to improve care quality. The biggest challenge for teams so far has been learning how to pull their quality measures using their EHRs. But as we know, if we can’t measure our performance, we can’t improve it,” says Michael Parchman, MD, MPH, director of GHRI’s MacColl Center for Health Care Innovation.

Tony Butruille, MD, of Cascade Medical Center in Leavenworth, Wash., said his practice was eager to sign up.



“The network will help us make our team more efficient,” says Dr. Butruille. “We’re starting to improve our care processes, put the latest research into practice, and use our electronic health records more efficiently. That means we’ll be able to take even better care of our patients with chronic conditions—and help save lives.”

Group Health’s MacColl Center leads Healthy Hearts Northwest in partnership with Qualis Health, Oregon Health & Science University, and the Institute of Translational Health Sciences at the University of Washington.

## Readying runners for Spokane’s Bloomsday Run

Each May, Spokane hosts the Lilac Bloomsday Run with more than 46,500 entrants.

Group Health has been an official first-aid provider at the 7.5-mile run for 38 years, and hosts free training clinics along with Providence Health System to prepare runners for the big race. At each clinic, athletes are coached, warm up, and then run, walk, or roll a training course, adding a mile each week until race day. Group Health also sets up water stations, keeping runners hydrated.

Carol Ann Cochran, a medical assistant at Group Health Riverfront Medical Center, has coordinated the event for 27 years: “I have done Bloomsday ever since my daughter was six months old and on my back. She now volunteers when we need extra people.”

“I start my Saturdays for seven weeks at 6:30 a.m. to assist in set-up. I make sure the volunteers are in place, start the racers with my ‘new’ megaphone, and am there for any questions, medical treatment, and a hug for the participants at the end,” Cochran adds.

Staff from Group Health also provided first aid at Spokane’s Eight Lakes Leg Aches bike ride and SpokeFest. In Seattle, Group Health sponsored the Nordstrom Beat the Bridge run for the 11th year, helping raise nearly \$1.3 million for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF).

Supporting our neighbors to get and stay moving is one way we can contribute to reducing the burden of chronic disease.

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I have done Bloomsday ever since my daughter was six months old and on my back. She now volunteers when we need extra people.

Carol Ann Cochran, medical assistant  
Group Health Riverfront Medical Center

”



Group Health hosts free training programs to prepare runners for the Bloomsday Run.

## Healthy resources for neighbors—just a click away

Let's say you have diabetes, and your doctor advises you to eat healthier and exercise more. How would you get started on those health goals?

Many doctors don't have the time to help their patients find local resources like exercise classes, farmers markets, or food banks, so Group Health created a database called Neighborhood Health Link to make it easier.

Neighborhood Health Link is a free, searchable database where anyone can find free or low-cost resources in the Seattle-Tacoma area that support active living, healthy eating, and managing chronic conditions. Users can search by ZIP code, age group, or topic, and also find links to resources that provide affordable insurance, transportation, housing, and food assistance. Health providers may create links to resources that patients can click on and view at home. The service has been promoted to medical librarians and other health care organizations in the area, and it's available to the public. [Visit Neighborhoodhealthlink.org](http://Neighborhoodhealthlink.org) to get started.

The screenshot displays the Neighborhood Health Link website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Start a New Search' and 'My Saved Resources'. Below this is a banner with images of people and text: 'Online access to community resources for healthy living in King and Pierce counties' and 'Find free or low-cost resources that support active living, healthy eating and managing chronic health conditions—right in your community.' There are also social media and suggestion buttons.

The main content area is divided into three steps:
 

- Step 1: Select a Topic** - Lists various topics of interest such as Chronic Disease Management, Dance, Exercise Classes, Gyms/Athletic Clubs, Healthy Eating, Martial Arts, Outdoor Recreation, Sports, and Weight Loss Programs.
- Step 2: Select a Keyword** - Lists keywords like All Chronic Disease Management, Aquatic Therapy, Arthritis, Diabetes, Instructional Classes, Therapeutic Exercise, and Weight Watchers.
- Step 3: Select Filters** - Includes filters for No Preference, County, City, and Zip.

On the right side, there are 'Quick Links' for 'YMCA schedules' (King County, Pierce County) and 'Programs at parks & community centers' (Seattle).

The bottom section shows search results for 'Diabetes' serving all areas. It includes a table with columns for Organization, Program Name, Location Details / Distance, and Short Description / Features. The results list several programs like Auburn Valley YMCA, Bellevue YMCA, and Coal Creek YMCA, each with their respective addresses, phone numbers, and websites.

Neighborhoodhealthlink.org offers free and low-cost resources around the Seattle-Tacoma area.

# Big data in research

## Data answers big questions

From the beginning, Group Health Research Institute (GHRI) has relied on large databases to find answers. “We’ve been using big data forever,” says Eric B. Larson, MD, MPH, Group Health’s vice president for research.

Group Health started computerizing pharmacy records in 1977, and founded a national research network in the 1980s, now called the Health Care Systems Research Network.

Through these connections, GHRI has access to electronic health records (EHRs) and pharmacy records of large populations, stripped of patient-identifying details to ensure privacy. Our biostatisticians are skilled at asking the right questions, analyzing the data, and coming to reliable conclusions—especially about the safety of drugs. We share these findings in the public domain to be used widely and freely.

## 2015 highlights

**FDA SAFETY:** We participated in the U.S. Food & Drug Administration’s (FDA) Sentinel Initiative, a nationwide project to monitor the safety of medications after they are released to market.

**COMMON DRUGS AND DEMENTIA:** Our researchers also discovered that taking certain common medications may increase the risk for dementia in older adults. These include older antidepressants, bladder control drugs, and over-the-counter drugs like Benadryl, Dramamine, and nighttime sleep aids. The drugs are in a class called anticholinergics. The research was performed by Group Health and the University of Washington, and shared with the public to ensure that people can be informed and avoid the risk.

**PERSONALIZING WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY:** The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute operates a national, secure set of data that teams can use to perform patient-centered research. GHRI was awarded \$4.5 million to study three common bariatric surgery procedures (for weight loss) and compare them based on weight loss, diabetes control, and safety.

“We’ll be able to study subsets of people based on gender, age, and ethnicity, so doctors can personalize treatment for their patients,” says David Arterburn, MD, MPH, senior investigator at GHRI.

About 250,000 patients undergo bariatric surgery each year in the U.S. The three procedures are gastric bypass, gastric band, and sleeve gastrectomy. Group Health leads the research with the University of Pittsburgh and Vanderbilt University.







**SAFER MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN:** GHRI received a \$9.6 million contract to find safer ways to treat behavioral disorders in children and teens. About 175,000 children in the U.S. today have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) combined with a secondary disorder for disruptive behavior. Clinicians often prescribe antipsychotic drugs, which can have serious side effects for youth such as significant weight gain and risk of developing diabetes.

Group Health Investigator Robert Penfold, PhD, leads the study. He's developing a program where doctors will be prompted in their EHR to consult with a child psychiatrist before prescribing an antipsychotic. His colleagues will also test new technology allowing families to schedule and hold psychotherapy visits with a psychologist using a tablet or cell phone—improving access to care. The research is funded by GHRI's Director's Fund and the National Institute of Mental Health to help inform community practices and to keep our kids safe and supported.

## GROUP HEALTH FOUNDATION

# Straight talk about vaccines

Vaccines save lives. They stop infectious diseases such as polio, measles, and hepatitis from spreading. But too many Northwest families have delayed or avoided vaccination out of safety fears, which has led to dangerous outbreaks of whooping cough and measles in Washington.

## Tackling vaccine hesitancy

We have to help families get reliable information about vaccines. From Group Health's Foundation, to the Research Institute, to our community outreach, immunization is a priority for our community.

In 2015, Group Health Research Institute tested a new way to train doctors to talk about hesitancy with parents. The results of "Let's Talk Vaccines" were published in *Pediatrics*. While the intervention did not change mothers' vaccine hesitancy or doctors' confidence about communicating, we verified that we have more to learn about communicating effectively with hesitant parents.

As part of this commitment, Group Health is one of nine health care systems that is helping the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention monitor vaccines on a national scale. Through the Vaccine Safety Datalink project, our researchers share our data and monitor it for unusual outcomes.

## Group Health Foundation's Immunization Initiative

Through its Childhood Immunization Initiative, the Group Health Foundation is serious about stopping the spread of contagious diseases. For more than a decade Group Health has partnered with WithinReach to connect families to resources about immunization.

Both groups belong to the Vax Northwest partnership, which leads the Immunity Community, a health promotion campaign that trains parents to speak confidently about vaccination through their social networks in elementary schools, childcare centers, and preschools. The campaign touched 2,000 families in Bellingham, Edmonds, and Spokane, as well as in Kitsap and Thurston counties.



Samina Giri and her two children at a vaccination event.

Giri. WithinReach pulled in the Snohomish Health District, which contributed translators and insurance options for the families. “Everyone was so committed and driven to help,” Giri adds.

Samina Giri is a mother and nursing student in Lynnwood who helped set up a vaccination clinic at her daughter’s elementary school, via WithinReach and the Western Washington chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses. She had discovered that some 25 students were not permitted to attend class because they weren’t immunized.

“Many of the families had misinformation or no resources. We had new families arriving to the U.S. who didn’t know how to access care for their child or what they needed,” recalls

## Powering HPV prevention

WithinReach and the Foundation also teamed up in 2015 to address Washington’s low vaccination rates for human papillomavirus (HPV), a precursor to cervical and other types of cancer.

“HPV has one of the lowest vaccination rates in Washington, and it’s proven to prevent cancer. We knew we had a huge opportunity to move the needle on this issue,” says Grace Chien, a board member for the Group Health Foundation.

“

Over the past four years we’ve honed and tested strategies that are proven to change parents’ attitudes and behavior about vaccines. Fewer people are hesitant to immunize their children today than before we started...

Todd Faubian, PhD  
WithinReach immunization manager

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The Foundation awarded \$300,000 in grants to eight community groups that use different channels to encourage the vaccine. “We selected WithinReach as the best qualified organization to coordinate these grantees’ efforts across the state, bringing the groups together to share best practices and avoid duplication,” Chien adds.

“The Foundation showed visionary leadership by proposing a model we hadn’t tried before that’s been incredibly successful,” says Todd Faubian, PhD, immunization manager at WithinReach. “The grantees are learning so much from each other and together we’re extending our reach more widely.”

## 2015 GRANT RECIPIENTS

American Cancer Society  
Asotin County Health District  
Immunization Action Coalition of the Inland NW  
Planned Parenthood  
Public Health—Seattle & King County  
Snohomish Health District  
Washington Healthcare Access Alliance  
WithinReach



## Philanthropy for good

Donors make our immunization initiative possible. The 14th Annual Group Health Foundation Gift of Health Gala raised more than \$740,000 for its Childhood Immunization Initiative and HPV Vaccination Awareness. Giving matters—and will continue to do so.

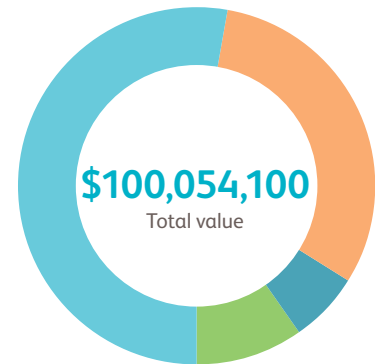
Thank you to our many generous donors and guests!



## 2015 Group Health Community Contributions

The programs and services highlighted in this report, plus other efforts, all support Group Health's commitment to enrich people's lives by improving health. In 2015, they totaled a \$100 million value to the community.

● Research	\$52,379,900
● Care and coverage for low-income populations	\$32,727,000
● Community health initiatives and services	\$3,237,100
● Health professions education	\$11,710,100
<b>Total value</b>	<b>\$100,054,100</b>



## Group Health Foundation

Group Health physicians and staff, and other donors, once again committed generously to the Foundation's mission. Contributed cash and pledges totaled \$2,288,781.

### WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

Members	32%
Medical staff	12%
Staff	17%
Corporations/Foundation	23%
Other individuals	10%
Estates	6%

### WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

Immunization	28%
Innovation & research	46%
Adolescent health	9%
Group Health departments/programs	17%

## GROUP HEALTH FOUNDATION

### 2015 Board of Directors

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## Group Health Research Institute

In 2015, the Group Health Research Institute continued to conduct practical research that improves the lives of people everywhere. Total revenue for the year was \$46.3 million.

### 2015 REVENUE BY SPONSOR

NIH	52%
Non-NIH federal sources	19%
PCORI, state, industry, and other	15%
Foundations	10%
Group Health Cooperative	4%

