

# An Employer's Guide to Avoiding Out-of-Network Charges

Thursday, March 24 | 10:00am – 11:00am



# Introduction

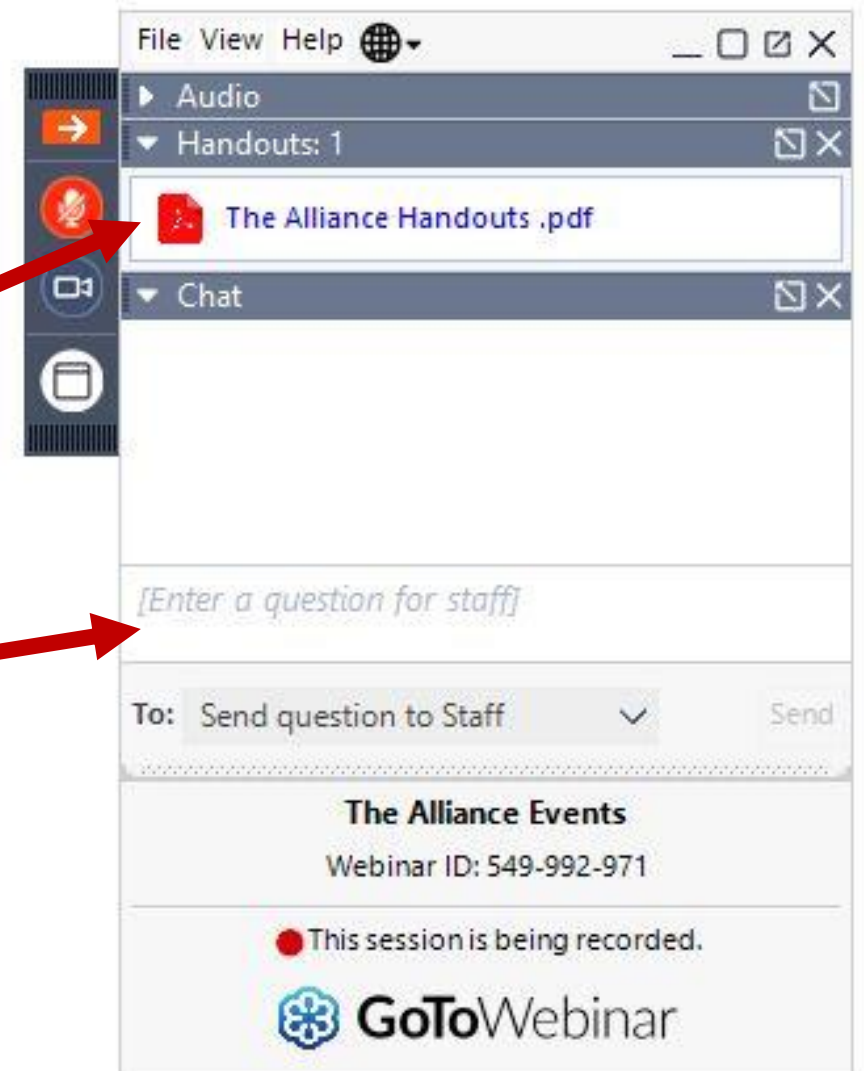


**Melina Kambitsi, Ph.D.**

Sr. Vice President, Business  
Development & Strategic Marketing,  
The Alliance

# Housekeeping

- You'll be muted during the webinar.
- **To access and download the handouts**, you can do so by clicking on the “Handouts” dropdown.
- **To ask a question**, please use the chat feature.
- *If you have any issues during the webinar, please use the question box to communicate with the host.*



# Thank You to Our Sponsors



# Introduction

**Out-of-network spend is your largest spend – bring that spend in-network**



**Strategies to identify opportunities for how to avoid**



**Data and cost transparency**



# An Employer's Guide to Avoiding Out-of-Network Charges

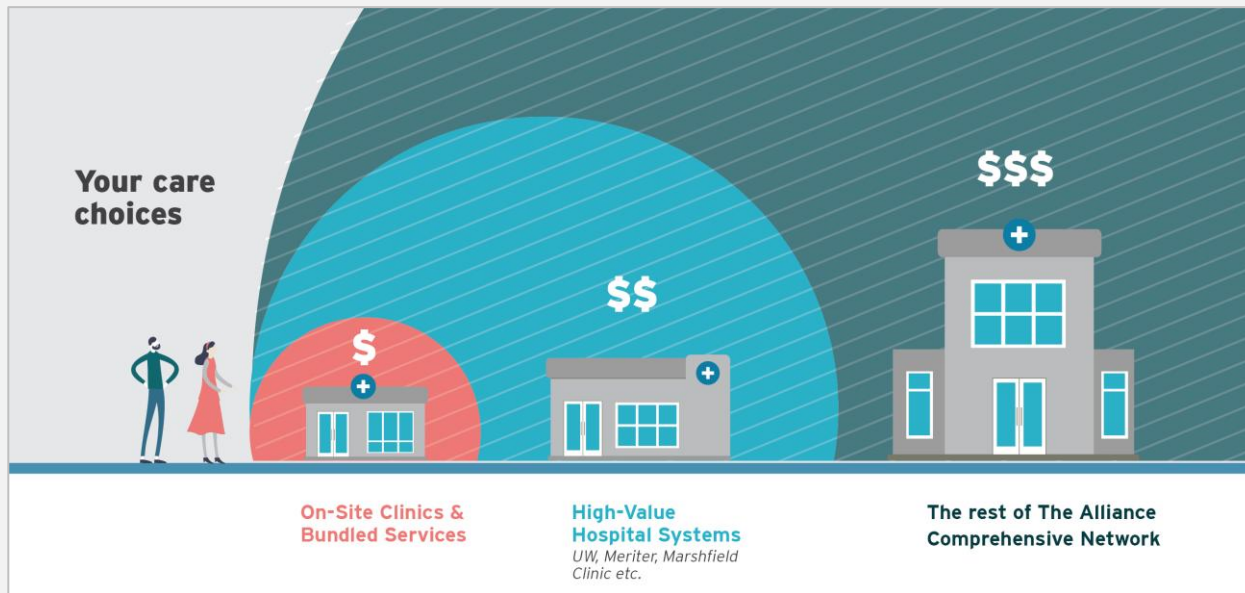


**Deb Kunferman**

Vice President of Network Development &  
Provider Relations,  
The Alliance

# Terminology

## Out of Network Charges



## Balance Bills

### **BILL**

#### Total Charges



#### Health Plan Allowed



#### Patient Responsibility



**\$XXX.XX**

# Terminology: Surprise Billing

A surprise bill is when an insured patient receives care at an in-network facility

**BUT**

one or more providers who treat them are not part of the network.



**One in 5 Americans**

who visit an emergency room or get surgery receive a surprise medical bill



[HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation \(ASPE\)](#)



# The Alliance identifies out-of-network providers



We added **174** new provider entities to the network in 2021 accounting for more than **365** new locations to the network.

- ✓ **8** Hospitals
- ✓ **2** Ambulatory Surgical Centers
- ✓ **116** Behavioral Health Providers
- ✓ **32** Chiropractors
- ✓ **207** Clinics

1. Review the out-of-network list quarterly.
2. Determine if it is viable to add them to the network.
3. Work with the right providers for contracting.

# Referrals

- Our providers have made a commitment to refer to other in-network providers – **and it's in our contracts.**
- In-network providers should be protecting:
  - Our employers
  - Their employees and families

**If this isn't happening – let us know! We will work with our providers to make sure it does.**

# Surprise Billing

- Legislation update – No Surprises Act
- Patient rights and protections
  - No balance billing allowed
  - Facilities must notify patients of their rights
  - Educate patients - don't give up your protections!
- Employer price protections
- Avoiding surprise bills

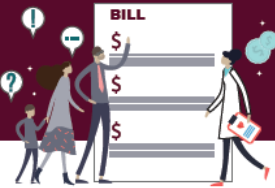


# Guide for Employers

- Employee education
  - Benefits Meetings
  - Flyers
- How to use the Find A Doctor tool
- Nominate out-of-network providers
- Smarter Health Analysis

# Employee Education

## How to Avoid Out-of-Network Charges



### WHAT'S AN OUT-OF-NETWORK CHARGE?

A network refers to doctors, hospitals, and other medical providers that accept your insurance. An out-of-network charge happens when you seek care outside of your health plan's network of authorized providers.



### BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

#### Use In-Network Doctor

- Read and understand your plan's benefits and limitations to maximize your insurance benefits.
- Use Find a Doctor ([findadoctor.the-alliance.org](http://findadoctor.the-alliance.org)).
- Call the number on the back of your card to see if your doctor/procedure is in-network.
- Get everything in writing.

### Find a Doctor

### AT YOUR APPOINTMENT

#### Ask What is Covered

- Confirm your doctor will take your insurance. Always bring your newest insurance card with you and ask the provider to update it. If you manage your information on your "mychart" update your information prior to seeking care.
- Ask how much it will cost you, and for the procedure's billing code, when you are referred to a specialist or have an additional procedure. Call your insurance with the billing code and ask for your out-of-pocket costs.
- Be aware, it's possible to be at an in-network facility but be seen by a doctor or specialist who is out-of-network.
- Seek costs upfront if you need out-of-network care. Call your insurance to identify in-network providers.
- Ask your provider questions about referrals and seek the best cost options based on your plan. Bring an advocate with you to your appointment who can ask questions for you.



### AFTER YOUR APPOINTMENT

#### Confirm the Charges!

When you receive your bill, call the number on your insurance card to confirm the charges are correct – mistakes can happen! (Make sure negotiated bills serve as payment in full.)

[info@the-alliance.org](mailto:info@the-alliance.org) | [the-alliance.org](http://the-alliance.org) | 800.223.4139

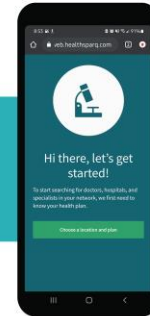


## Know the quality. Know the costs. Skip the surprises.



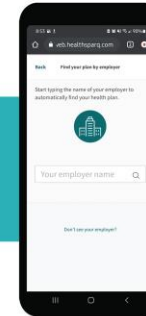
### Find a Doctor

Compare and contrast doctors, hospitals, and specialty services with readily available information at your fingertips. Find a Doctor by The Alliance is all about ease of access so you can make more informed decisions when it comes to choosing high quality, low-cost care.



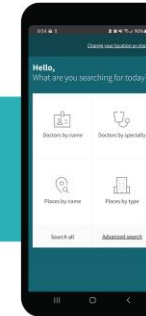
#### Visit our website

Go to [findadoctor.the-alliance.org](http://findadoctor.the-alliance.org) on your computer or mobile device to use Find a Doctor.



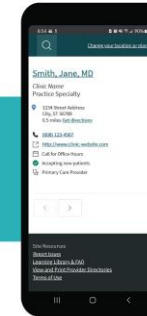
#### Find your plan

Type your zip code and employer's name to find your plan. (If no plan options include your employer's name, choose The Alliance Comprehensive Network to view our entire network.)



#### Search for providers

Search by doctor name, doctor specialty, facility name, or facility type.



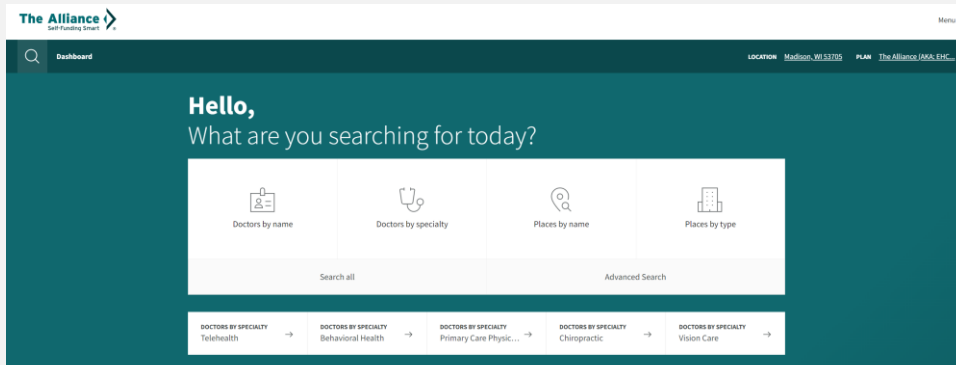
#### Review your results

You can compare doctors by location, gender, and languages spoken. You can even find out if they're accepting new patients, are a QualityPath provider, and whether or not they charge facility fees!

[info@the-alliance.org](mailto:info@the-alliance.org) | [the-alliance.org](http://the-alliance.org) | 800.223.4139



# Find A Doctor



## Explore and learn more

**Comprehensive Network**  
We've curated a vast network of 32,000 low-cost, high-quality doctors and other providers to ensure maximum geographical coverage for you and your family. More in-network choices means less surprise bills for you!

[View Our Network](#)

**Facility Fees**  
Find a Doctor displays which providers charge facility fees—additional charges used to maintain the provider's establishment—and helps patients avoid them. Look for an orange caution symbol (!) when searching for a doctor.

[Learn More About Facility Fees](#)

**Cost Estimate Forms**  
Receive a cost estimate for your procedure (or compare cost estimates between providers in your area) by filling out our Cost Estimate form. It's free and only takes a few minutes!

[Get A Cost Estimate](#)

**QualityPath**  
Find low-cost providers for select surgeries (like knee replacements) and tests (CT/MRI scans). Look for the QualityPath logo while searching or check with your Benefit Administrator to see if your plan participates in QualityPath and to direct you.

[Learn More About QualityPath](#)

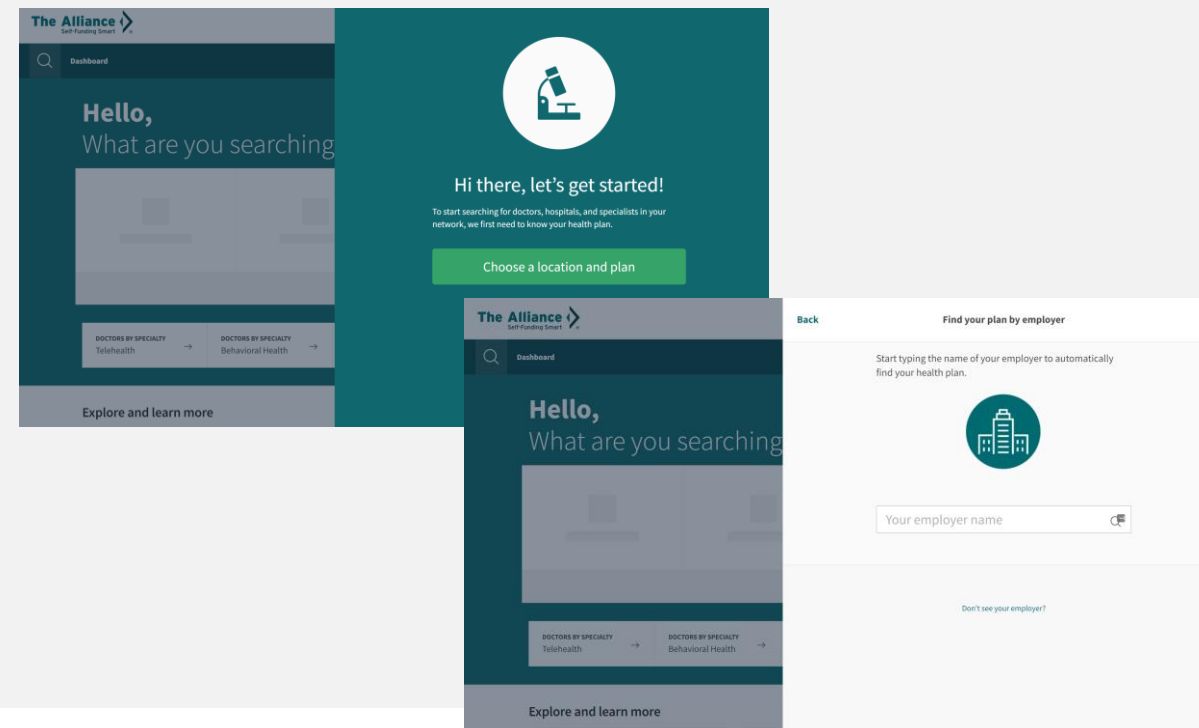
**Bundled Services**  
Specific surgeries and tests are often billed separately, which makes the total cost of a service difficult to compare between providers. Our bundled service providers simplify pricing by packaging them into one easy-to-assess price.

[Learn About Bundled Services](#)

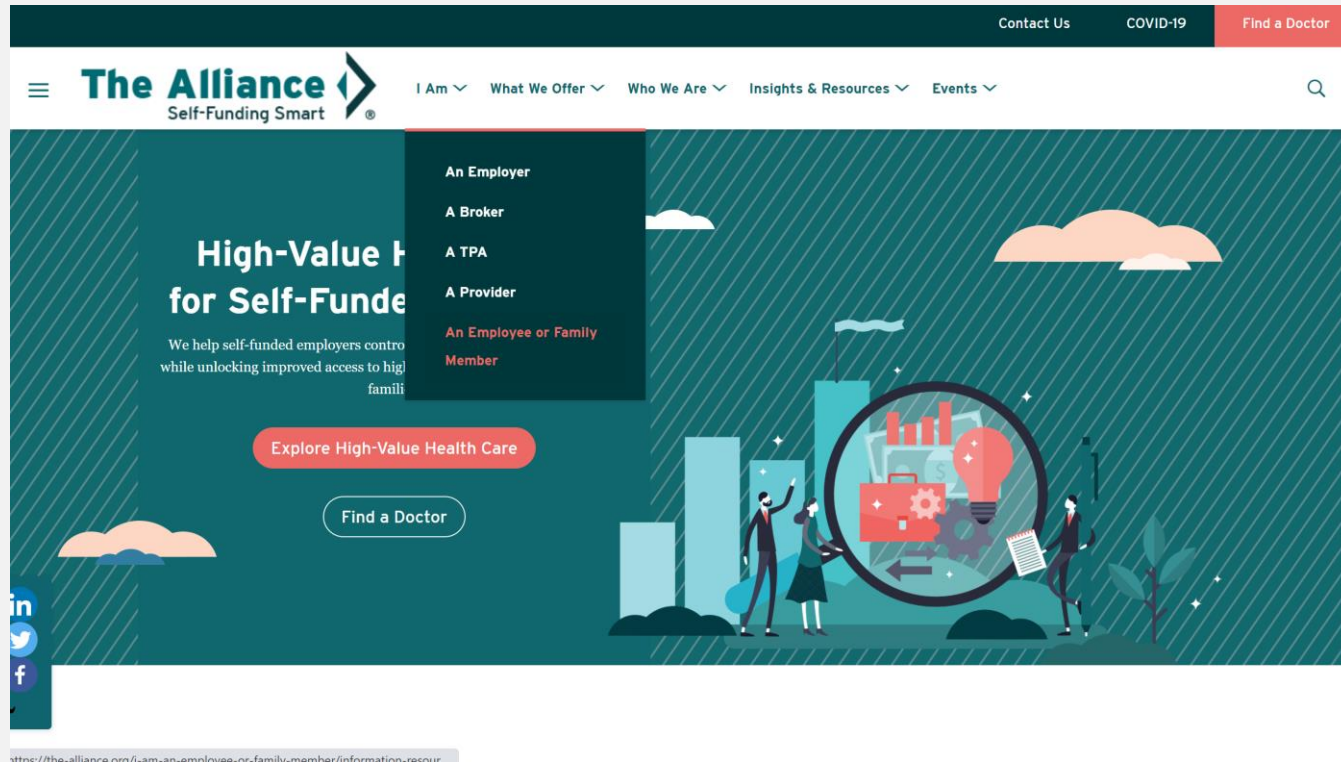
**About The Alliance**  
The Alliance is a not-for-profit, employer-owned health cooperative that helps our members smartly manage their health care spend. We help over 300 self-funded employers and their employees find low-cost, high-quality doctors, hospitals, and clinics.

[Learn More About The Alliance](#)

- Go to [findadoctor.the-alliance.org](https://findadoctor.the-alliance.org)
- Enter your location
- Search for your employer by name to find your plan
- Search for providers by name, specialty, facility name, or facility type.



# Nominate out-of-network providers



**Not finding your preferred provider?**

Recommend we add them to our Find A Doctor tool.

[Recommend a Provider](#)

# Smarter Health Analysis

- Smarter Health Analysis = access to your data to make better decisions
- Steerage to high-value providers
- Need help with specialty care? Having access issues?
  - Call us! Account management is here to help our employers!

## In Network/Out of Network

| Year | Claims | Gross Charges | Out of Network Charges | In Network Charges | In Network Reprice | In Network % | In Network Savings | In Network Discount |
|------|--------|---------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 2016 | 4054   | \$4,373,457   | \$145,390              | \$4,228,066        | \$2,457,328        | 96.68%       | \$1,770,738        | 41.88%              |
| 2017 | 4409   | \$4,375,296   | \$239,251              | \$4,136,046        | \$2,368,114        | 94.53%       | \$1,767,932        | 42.74%              |
| 2018 | 6100   | \$6,749,579   | \$263,304              | \$6,486,275        | \$3,726,862        | 96.1%        | \$2,759,413        | 42.54%              |
| 2019 | 6191   | \$7,573,663   | \$447,079              | \$7,126,583        | \$4,021,252        | 94.1%        | \$3,105,331        | 43.57%              |
| 2020 | 6850   | \$7,924,371   | \$229,704              | \$7,694,667        | \$4,120,317        | 97.1%        | \$3,574,350        | 46.43%              |

## ER Utilization

| Year   | Per 1,000 Lives               |                           |            | Cost Per Treatment |               |            | More Employer Info  |                          |
|--------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
|        | Employer Treatments Per 1,000 | Peer Treatments Per 1,000 | Difference | Employer Avg Cost  | Peer Avg Cost | Difference | Employer Treatments | Employer Treatment Costs |
| CY2016 | 301.4                         | 158.1                     | 47.53%     | \$788              | \$876         | -11.2%     | 144                 | \$113,496                |
| CY2017 | 263.2                         | 158.5                     | 39.8%      | \$779              | \$913         | -17.2%     | 152                 | \$118,387                |
| CY2018 | 392.5                         | 156.1                     | 60.24%     | \$1,038            | \$1,005       | 3.11%      | 271                 | \$281,200                |
| CY2019 | 359.5                         | 145.2                     | 59.62%     | \$905              | \$1,086       | -20.04%    | 279                 | \$252,389                |
| CY2020 | 341.9                         | 129.5                     | 62.12%     | \$1,041            | \$1,191       | -14.46%    | 281                 | \$292,417                |
| CY2016 | 142.3                         | 131.1                     | 7.89%      | \$326              | \$190         | 41.67%     | 68                  | \$22,147                 |
| CY2017 | 154.1                         | 126.8                     | 17.75%     | \$335              | \$208         | 37.95%     | 89                  | \$29,839                 |

## 100 Miles Steerage Recommendations

| Steerage Procedure Group | Recommended Provider To Steer To | City   | Episode Count | Total Price Paid | Savings      |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| MRI                      | Health Center A                  | City A | 39            | \$113,372.81     | \$93,950.40  |
| Cataract Surgery         | Hospital B                       | City B | 6             | \$53,944.54      | \$47,297.20  |
| Colonoscopy              | Specialty Clinic A               | City C | 11            | \$53,735.88      | \$46,515.20  |
| CT                       | Radiology Center A               | City A | 14            | \$35,243.54      | \$28,924.80  |
| Echocardiogram           | Specialty Clinic B               | City B | 12            | \$27,152.36      | \$23,745.20  |
| EGD                      | Medical Group A                  | City B | 6             | \$22,779.96      | \$17,820.40  |
| Non-Fetal US             | Medical Group B                  | City C | 26            | \$22,468.87      | \$16,468.00  |
| Mammography              | Hospital C                       | City A | 30            | \$21,209.07      | \$16,100.00  |
| X-Ray                    | Specialty Clinic D               | City B | 52            | \$19,114.00      | \$15,741.20  |
| Hysterectomy             | Health Center C                  | City D | 1             | \$23,558.97      | \$10,662.80  |
|                          |                                  |        | 195           | \$392,580.01     | \$317,225.20 |

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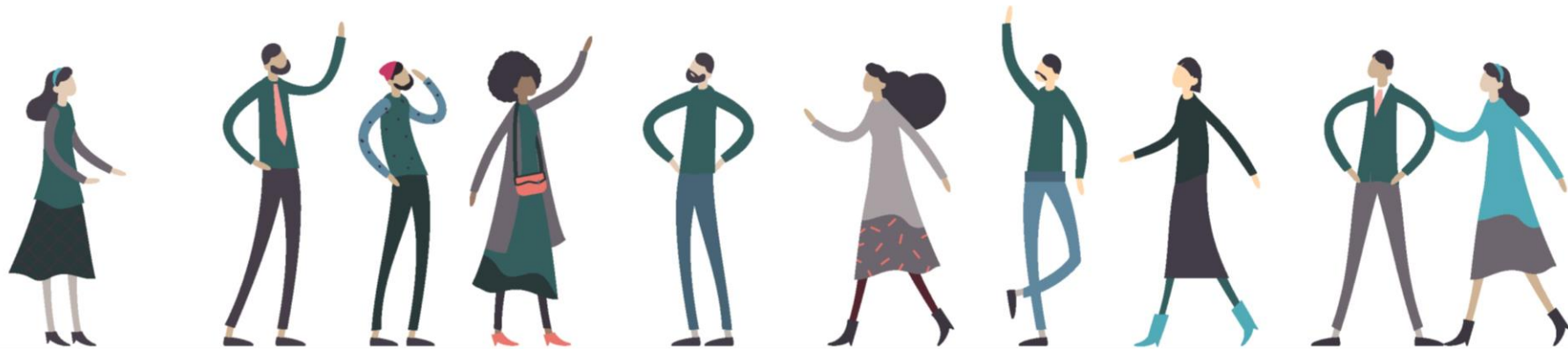


# Questions



# Thank You

✉ [events@the-alliance.org](mailto:events@the-alliance.org) 🔗 [www.the-alliance.org](http://www.the-alliance.org)



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# Healthcare Transformation Awards Nomination



## Healthcare Transformation Awards

# Upcoming Events: Spring Symposium

