



For Immediate Release

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**UNINSURED INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS GET FREE
HEALTH SCREENINGS THANKS TO A NOVEL PARTNERSHIP**

Washington Artists Health Insurance Project (WAHIP) and Qliance
Sponsor One-Day Event to Promote Accessible Healthcare

Individual artists from all creative disciplines across King County have an opportunity to receive a free health screening on March 15 at Qliance, a monthly-fee primary care clinic based in Seattle, thanks to the clinic and the Washington Artists Health Insurance Project (WAHIP). This one-day health screening is being offered as part of an innovative partnership with Qliance, a new primary and preventative care clinic that operates outside of the traditional health insurance arena. The screening will include a glucose test, blood pressure measurement, a BMI calculation and a cholesterol test. Free copies of the newly published *Health Care Guide for Artists*, a brochure of state-wide health resources, will also be available onsite.

The *Health Care Guide for Artists*, developed by WAHIP and Artist Trust in partnership with The Actors' Fund, brings together information that assists artists in understanding the health coverage landscape in Washington. It clarifies current options and opportunities, while underscoring the limitations that exist, especially for self-employed and freelance artists who can not avail of employer health care plans.

"The healthcare crisis is at the forefront this election year because many hardworking people—especially artists—cannot afford the rising cost of individual insurance plans, so they go without or pay through the nose" said Fidelma McGinn, Executive Director of Artist Trust, which leads WAHIP, an initiative working to improve artists' access to health coverage in Washington State. "These free screenings and the new *Health Care Guide* are part of a larger WAHIP effort that provides some important steps by helping artists better understand their coverage options while getting some affordable care. We hope to help spark bigger healthcare reforms."

There are approximately 22,000 artists in Washington State and, according to WAHIP's data, nearly half of them do not have adequate health insurance and a third or more have delayed treatment for a medical problem in the past 12 months because of costs. WAHIP includes two dozen representatives from arts and cultural organizations that are connected to thousands of individual artists (see attached list).

"Health bills are a strain for most people and especially for artists. Many of us live hand-to-mouth, often holding down several jobs in order to make our artwork," said Susan Kunimatsu, an artist and WAHIP Steering Committee member. "WAHIP is working to keep us from falling through the cracks and into further debt. We can't fight the system on our own."



Space is limited. Interested artists should contact Qliance to reserve your spot at (206) 913-4771 or rsvp@qliance.com. Provide your name and arrival time, and "RSVP" in the subject line of the e-mail. If you're a musician, you may be eligible to participate in a more in-depth health evaluation on March 22, provided by MusiCares and Qliance. For more information contact MusiCares at 1-800-687-4227.

For members of the media: To attend a screening, speak with organizers or artists, contact Fidelma McGinn, 206/467-8734 x12.

The Washington Artists Health Insurance Project (WAHIP) is an effort to forge new strategies to improve artists' access to health insurance in Washington State. The project serves as a model for other state-based health insurance efforts to extend benefits to artists working in all disciplines. WAHIP is a pilot project of Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC), which works to improve the living and working conditions of artists, in partnership with Artist Trust, and supported with funding from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, the Ford Foundation and Nathan Cummings Foundation. For additional information or to view WAHIP research: www.wahip.org

Artist Trust is a not-for-profit organization whose sole mission is to support and encourage individual artists working in all disciplines in order to enrich community life throughout Washington State. Find out more at www.artisttrust.org.

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