



**COMMUNITY  
HEALTH NETWORK**  
of Washington™

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **NCW DIGITAL EQUITY INITIATIVE KICKS OFF WITH TWO DIGITAL NAVIGATOR LAUNCH EVENTS**

Wenatchee, WA - The NCW Digital Equity Initiative is led by Community Health Network of Washington (CHNW), in partnership with the North Central Accountable Community of Health and NCW Tech Alliance, is calling upon Community-Based Organizations to strengthen their efforts in helping community members access digital resources and support in Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan Counties.

To kick off these efforts, the first ever Digital Navigator Launch Event is scheduled on Thursday, March 30 from 4:00PM - 5:30PM at [Pybus Public Market in Wenatchee](#). The event aims to bring together community members and organizations to help bridge the digital divide in North Central Washington. A second event is scheduled on Thursday, April 27 from 11:30AM - 1:00PM at [Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake](#).

The NCW Digital Equity Initiative, funded by the Washington State Department of Commerce, Office of Broadband, aims to connect people to the [Link to Care WA](#) Hotline, train regional navigators to provide digital literacy support for community members, distribute a limited number of smart devices, and establish the North Central Washington Digital Access and Equity Coalition with community-based organizations for long-term solutions to address the region's digital divide.

“The partnership among these regional organizations is an exciting opportunity to promote digital equity across North Central Washington and is a model for expansion into other regions of the state,” said Leanne Berge, CEO at CHNW and CHPW. “We know that eliminating technological barriers to health care by putting phones in people’s hands, connecting them to the internet, and equipping patients to navigate technology, not only improves their health, but also improves their access to employment, education, and other essential social supports.”

NCW Tech Alliance Executive Director Jenny Rojanasthien states, “NCW Tech Alliance is excited about the opportunity to work with the Community Health Network of Washington to build a coalition for digital access and equity for North Central Washington. As the region's technology alliance, we are deeply invested in efforts that bring more technology resources and education to our region. We also look forward to bringing our local partners into this work as we work to bridge the digital divide across our rural communities.”

According to the 2020 US Census, up to 19% of households in North Central Washington lack an internet connection, with a further 10% to 23% of households not having a smartphone. The digital divide affects economic and learning opportunities, civic engagement, and access to critical social resources. Achieving digital equity requires a proactive approach towards digital inclusion. In its first year, NCW Tech Help will provide digital navigation training across the communities of Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan Counties and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

The NCW Digital Equity Initiative is a partnership among Community Health Network of Washington, North Central Accountable Community of Health, NCW Tech Alliance, and Bigfoot Telecommunications of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

A series of local, in-person digital navigation training sessions will be held at community sites in the upcoming months and a limited amount of free, internet-enabled smart devices with a one-year prepaid data plan will be distributed. Organizations opting to join our efforts and have their staff receive the digital navigation training will receive a monetary grant of \$500 per staff member. Digital Navigator training workshops start in April. If you'd like to participate, please use our [interest survey link](#) to receive more information.

Our upcoming launch events in Wenatchee and Moses Lake will help the community learn how to get involved, hear success stories from impacted individuals, and make great connections.

Join the Initiative on Thursday, March 30 from 4:00PM - 5:30PM at [Pybus Public Market in Wenatchee](#) over complimentary appetizers, drinks and networking, or on Thursday, April 27 from 11:30AM - 1:00PM at [Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake](#) over complimentary lunch and networking.

The Initiative provides access to digital resources and the skills and support needed to engage online effectively for community members in need. Call the Hotline today at 866-757-1832 (TTY: 711) for free help. For more information, visit [www.ncwtech.org/techhelp](http://www.ncwtech.org/techhelp).

### **About NCW Tech Alliance**

Since 1999, NCW Tech Alliance has served as the region's tech alliance, championing growth and development in North Central Washington. As a 501(c)3, NCW Tech Alliance's mission is to bring together people and resources in technology, entrepreneurship, and STEM education. For more information visit [www.ncwtech.org](http://www.ncwtech.org)

### **About CHNW:**

Since 1992, Community Health Network of Washington (CHNW) clinics have been providing Washington state residents with affordable, community-based care. Informed by their understanding of social determinants of health, CHNW brings together Community Health Centers (CHCs) and other health leaders with their shared values of equal access to care and social justice. Through leveraging their shared resources and expertise, CHNW has been able to undertake strategic public policy and advocacy efforts in both Olympia, WA, and Washington, D.C., to ensure access to health care for every Washington state resident. Community Health Network of Washington serves nearly one million individuals across Washington through its member federally qualified community health centers across the State of Washington, and now offers Individual & Family Plans on the Washington health exchange. To learn more, visit [chnw.chpw.org](http://chnw.chpw.org)

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