

Helping Consumers and Purchasers Understand Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) Potential to Foster Quality While Reducing Costs

May 25, 2010

Resources & Background Material

The Accountable Care Organization (ACO) is a new model of delivering and paying for care that is gaining significant attention from consumers, purchasers, payers, providers, and policymakers. ACOs are generally defined as a group of providers, including at least physicians and hospitals, that have the legal structure to receive and distribute incentive payments to participating providers. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act established two accountable care programs, one for Medicare and the other for Medicaid. The Medicare ACO program will be a “shared savings program” to be established no later than January 1, 2012. If the ACO meets quality performance standards and a savings target, the ACO is eligible to share in the savings it generates. It will need to have at least 5,000 Medicare fee-for-service patients to participate and must coordinate services under Parts A and B, make investments in infrastructure, and redesign care processes for up to three years. A state pediatric ACO demonstration project, similar in design to the Medicare counterpart, will be established in 2012. Preference will be given to ACOs that participate in similar arrangements with other payers. In addition to ACOs being sponsored by health plans, the Brookings-Dartmouth collaboration is sponsoring four ACO pilots to test the model in the private sector and Premier has launched an implementation collaborative. A small but growing number of states, including Vermont, Massachusetts and Colorado, are already pursuing ACO demonstrations.

This document lists materials and resources that provide general background on the issues surrounding Accountable Care Organizations, as well as highlighting the multiple perspectives held by a variety of stakeholders. Some of the material reflects presentations made as part of the above-referenced discussion forum to foster better understanding of critical issues for consumer, labor and employer organizations.

Note: Bolded documents were provided to in-person participants.

PRESENTATIONS FROM MAY 25, 2010 ACO WEBINAR

- [**Accountable Care Organizations \(ACOs\): Potential to Foster Quality While Reducing Costs**](#)
David Lansky, Co-Chair, Consumer-Purchaser Disclosure Project and President and CEO, Pacific Business Group on Health.
- [**Models of Accountable Care: Serving Entire Populations versus Defined Episodes of Care and the Importance of Quality Measurement to ACOs' Success**](#)
Elliot S. Fisher, Director, Center for Health Policy Research, The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice.

[Accountable Care Organizations: Taking Shape at the Local Level](#)

Jim Hester, Director of the Health Care Reform Commission in Vermont.

- [ACOs: A Health Plan Perspective](#)
Kirk Stapleton, Sr. Vice President, Network Planning UnitedHealth Networks.
- Federal Implementation/Reaction
Jon Blum, Director, Center for Medicare Management, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (note: no Power Point slides).

GENERAL BACKGROUND

- [Can Accountable Care Organizations Improve the Value of Health Care by Solving the Cost and Quality Quandries?](#) Kelly Devers and Robert Berenson, The Urban Institute, October 2009.
- [Reforming Provider Payment: Moving Toward Accountability for Quality and Value.](#) Issue Brief, Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform at Brookings Institute, and the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, March 2009.
- [Accountable Care Organizations: Will They Deliver?](#) Marsha Gold, Mathematica Policy Research, January 2010.
- [Health Care Reform Requires Accountable Care Systems.](#) Stephen M. Shortell and Lawrence P. Casalino, Journal of the American Medical Association, 2008: 300 (1): 95-97. (payment required for full article)
- [The Accountable Care Organization \(ACO\) Learning Network.](#) A joint initiative of the Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform at Brookings and the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice.
- [Accountable Care Collaboratives: The Drive to High-Value Health Care.](#) Premier, Inc.
- [Research and Benchmarking: Accountable Care Organizations Best Practices and Collaboratives.](#) The American Medical Group Association.

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

- [A National Strategy to Put Accountable Care into Practice.](#) Mark McClellan, Aaron N. McKethan, Julie L. Lewis, Joachim Roski and Elliot S. Fisher, Health Affairs, 29 no. 5 (2010): 982-990. (payment required for full article).
- [Implementing Accountable Care Organizations.](#) Steven Shortell, Lawrence Casalino, and Elliot Fisher. Policy Brief, May 2010.
- [Accountable Care Organizations: Forging Stakeholder Partnerships for Health Care Performance and Efficiency.](#) Julie Lewis, Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, Presentation made to the NQF Spring Policy Conference, March 4, 2010.

- [Accountable Care Organizations: Implications for Antitrust Policy](#). Taylor Burke and Sara Rosenbaum, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Aligning Forces for Quality program, March 2010.
- [A “Yardstick” for Better Care: Elements of Patient-Centered Practice for Inclusion in New Models of Care](#). The Campaign for Better Care, National Partnership for Women & Families, 2010.
- [Building a Medical Neighborhood for the Medical Home](#). Elliot S. Fisher, New England Journal of Medicine, 2008; 359(12): 1202-05.
- [Feasibility Study for ACO Pilot of Community Based Payment Reform: Summary of Objectives, Key Issues and Project Structure](#). Vermont Commission on Health Care Reform, August 2008.

FEDERAL AND STATE POLICY

- [Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010](#). Pub.L. No. 111-148, Section 3022
- [MedPAC Report to the Congress: Improving Incentives in the Medicare Program, Chapter 2: Accountable Care Organizations](#). MedPAC, June 2009.
- [Fostering Accountable Health Care: Moving Forward in Medicare](#). Elliot S. Fisher, Mark B. McClellan, John Bertko, Steven M. Lieberman, Julie J. Lee, Julie L. Lewis, and Jonathan S. Skinner, Health Affairs 28, no. 2 (2009); w219-231, published online January 27, 2009.
- [Medicare’s Opportunity to Encourage Innovation in Health Care Delivery](#). Robert Mechanic and Stuart Altman, New England Journal of Medicine, March 3, 2010.
- [BlueCross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, The Alternative Quality Contract: Description and Power Point Presentation](#) by Patrick Gilligan and Dana Gelb Safran, BCBS of Massachusetts, 2009.
- [The Vermont Accountable Care Organization Pilot: A Community Health System to Control Total Medical Costs and Improve Population Health](#). Jim Hester, Julie Lewis, and Aaron McKethan, The Commonwealth Fund, May 14, 2010.
- Vermont legislation and reports on the ACO feasibility study and pilot:
 - [Act 203 of 2008, An Act Relating to Health Care Reform, Section 2](#)
 - [Act 49 Of 2009, An Act Relating to Containing Health Care Costs, Section 6](#)