

Medical Home Communities

Systems of Care/Patient Centered Medical Home Initiative

Physicians are faced with ongoing demands to provide evermore efficient, high quality care. But these demands are not insurmountable. Colorado is fortunate to have a wave of programs and initiatives that are supporting the drive to enhance the integration of the delivery system through medical homes and medical neighborhoods. Understanding and working on these advanced care models can help you in a number of ways including:

- Effectively communicating and coordinating care
 - using health information technology and health information exchange;
- Establishing standards and monitoring performance
 - using evidence based medicine and population health management;
- Demonstrating continuous improvement
 - using a systematic, quality improvement approach
- Providing value to the community
 - maximizing the efficiency, quality and safety of care.

Just like the strand of thread that weaves together a blanket, the stepwise pursuit of these models may initially appear small or disconnected, but they can evolve into dynamic changes for you, your practice and your patients. The medical home and medical neighborhood models are pathways to improved individual and system performance and viability. Whether you are interested in implementing state-of-the-art care management protocols, achieving meaningful use of an electronic medical record to secure federal stimulus funding, or nailing the latest health plan pay for performance program, the medical home/neighborhood models provide an operational framework for you to meet the challenges of 21st century health care.

“It’s hard work, but not as hard as medical school or residency,” says Scott Hammond, MD, medical director of the Systems of Care/Patient-centered Medical Home Initiative, referring to his drive to become a patient-centered medical home. “Now with the passage of federal health care reform, rather than scrambling to respond I know that I’m better prepared to survive and thrive in the future,” he says. You can be too, and there are a host of resources to help.

Aligned efforts

A medical home is a way of coordinating all health services in a quality, cost effective manner. Primary care medical homes emphasize team-based care that center on understanding and meeting patient and family needs. Colorado is home to many nationally renowned medical home programs including the Systems of Care (SOC)/Patient-centered Medical Home (PCMH) Initiative, Colorado Clinical Guidelines Collaborative all-payer pilot, and the Safety Net Medical Home Initiative. On top of that the state actually has law on the books to support the medical home and provide care for children in state-assisted programs. The Colorado Medical Home State Leadership Group, a collaboration of state agencies, Professional provider organizations (including CMS), non-profit organizations, and patient and family advocates, has been tasked with the role of aligning these efforts and working to unify the messaging. Taken together, these initiatives help to proactively position the state as the implementation of the federal health care reform bill begins.

The medical neighborhood, the broader network of health care providers that participate in the care of a patient, is the natural extension of the patient-centered

medical home model. The medical neighborhood provides a framework for better communication and safe, effective transitions of care between primary care and specialty care providers. By focusing on care coordination, physicians within a patient's care team ensure that the patient is getting the right care in the right place at the right time. This is an important opportunity for primary care and specialty care physicians to come together and to decide how they can design a delivery system from the bedside up.

You can learn more about the medical homes and medical neighborhoods at <http://www.cms.org/SOC-PCMHI/MedicalHomeCommunities.html>.

Help where you need it

The SOC/PCMH initiative, funded by a grant from the Colorado Health Foundation, is designed to help physicians like you get started with your practice evolution. This initiative is a partnership between the Colorado Medical Society, primary care specialty societies (CAFP, AAP-CO, ACP-CO), Colorado Society of Osteopathic Medicine and the Colorado Clinical Guidelines Collaborative. Over the past six months the initiative has developed and tested plans and programs for physicians to foster medical home models. We now offer a suite of performance improvement services ranging from large-group educational presentations, to practice-based hands on learning sessions like parades of medical homes, to rapid improvement activities. The initiative is in the process of rolling out these programs statewide and welcomes the opportunity to come to your practice and your community. Contact your local component society or call Karen Frederick-Gallegos in the CMS offices at 720-858-6323 to set up a meeting.

From Colorado Medicine March-April,2010.

The Colorado Health Foundation works to make Colorado the healthiest state in the nation by investing in grants and initiatives to health-related nonprofits that focus on increasing the number of Coloradans with health insurance; ensuring they have access to quality, coordinated care; and encouraging healthy living. For more information please visit www.ColoradoHealth.org.