

Montana Patient-Centered Medical Homes Initiative

Office of the Commissioner of Securities and Insurance (CSI)

Patient-Centered Medical Homes (PCMH)

A medical home is not so much a place, as it is a community of health professionals, lead by your primary care provider, focused on helping you become as healthy as you can be. Currently, providers are generally paid to treat illness and injury, providing incentives for excessive treatment, tests, and medication. This all leads to greater costs throughout our healthcare system.

Through the use of technology and custom designed services, patient-centered medical homes help manage health conditions and prevent illness. With an emphasis on preventative services, providers transform the health care system while they keep people healthy.

How it Began

In the fall of 2009 the Montana Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) received a technical assistance grant from the National Academy on State Health Policy (NASHP) to advanced Patient-Centered Medical Homes (PCMH) for Medicaid and CHIP patients. NASHP staff facilitated a meeting to address a statewide, multi-payer medical home initiative with providers, major payers, provider associations, state programs, and other interested parties.

The working group developed the Montana definition of patient-centered medical homes and began working on recognition standards. After discussion with a national payment expert and NASHP staff, all parties agreed that the Commissioner of Securities and Insurance should lead the group for the sake of neutrality.

Key Highlights

Commissioner Monica J. Lindeen met with all Montana's major domestic health insurers to ensure their continued involvement in the working group. After discussion concerning those medical practices that were already recognized under National Council on Quality Assurance (NCQA) 2008 standards, Commissioner Lindeen adopted the current recognition standards. Based on the working group's recommendation, the current standards allow for transition of existing NCQA-recognized practices into a pilot program where they may be eligible for enhanced payment reimbursement.

By the summer of 2011, the working group was examining various technology platforms to provide a data repository and uniform reporting system to support patient-centered medical homes. The group had agreed on a set of performance measures for medical homes and was aggregating existing data on these measures to help set benchmarks for future performance.

In August of 2011, Commissioner Lindeen reformed the working group as an official state advisory council. The advisory council includes insurance companies, medical providers, and consumer advocates working together to lay the groundwork for patient-centered medical homes in Montana. The council is developing a framework for enhanced reimbursement and examining anti-trust issues.

Find out more:

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Montana's Definition for PCMH

In Montana, a patient-centered medical home is health care directed by primary care providers offering family-centered, culturally-effective care that is coordinated, comprehensive, continuous, and, when possible, in the patient's community and integrated across systems. Health care is characterized by enhanced access, an emphasis on prevention, and improved health outcomes and satisfaction. Primary care providers receive payment that recognizes the value of medical home services.

Recognition Standards

Montana will use standards accepted by NCQA PCMH to recognize a primary care clinic as eligible for a pilot project as a medical home and potentially to receive enhanced reimbursement. Pilot sites will commit to moving along the NCQA tiered recognition process. Those recognized as Level 1 under NCQA PCMH 2008 standards must reach 2008 Level 2 or higher or 2011 Level 1 or higher by January 1, 2013. Once anti-trust issues are resolved, progression may be encouraged by enhanced reimbursement rates based on the level of recognition achieved.

Vision for the Future

Patient-centered medical homes have the potential to transform the way we deliver, pay for, and experience medical care. The PCMH Advisory Council is charged with supporting a pilot project in Montana by early 2012. All medical practices that wish to meet the recognition standards will be invited to participate.

Before that can happen, the advisory council will need to recommend how to pay for transformational activities by medical practices, how to measure the improved performance those activities should deliver, and a framework for consistent, enhanced reimbursement that supports quality outcomes. The advisory council will monitor the pilot project and make recommendations to help ensure the success and expansion of Patient-Centered Medical Homes in Montana.

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