

Case study: A peek inside the value-based care journey

Family Health Medical Services

Westfield, New York



5

PCPs

4

Locations

520

Humana MA members

Value-based care success requires strong commitment



Sharing Family Health Medical Services' value-based care story is
Dr. Robert Berke, founding partner

How did your practice start in value-based care?

Approximately 15 years ago, Family Health Medical Services (FHMS) recognized the future of value-based care and started to explore the opportunities presented to us by our largest managed care organization at the time. We recognized the benefits in both patient care and revenue generation for our organization and slowly developed a patient care coordination department to expound on the success we were already experiencing by the standard disease and health maintenance procedures being performed at a patient's regularly scheduled visit(s). Value-based care plays an integral role in FHMS operations and the healthcare experience for our patients.

What have been or continue to be some key areas of focus and investment?

A concentration on patient compliance and building lasting relationships with patients. Improving health outcomes requires a strong partnership between the clinician and the patient with clear goals and a structured plan of care to accomplish said goals. We continue to improve our reporting capabilities within our EMR to streamline our efforts and monitor our quality care performance on a monthly and quarterly basis.

How have relationships evolved between PCPs and specialists and other entities?

At FHMS, we have worked diligently to minimize unnecessary specialty referrals in an effort to reduce overall cost of care for our membership. As an independent primary care practice, we can refer strategically, taking into consideration network coverage, urgency of specialty care, burden of illness and social determinants of health that may affect a patient's ability to access specialty care.

We have an in-house referrals department that carefully investigates benefits to facilitate the most cost-effective and timely specialty appointment possible for our patients. At FHMS, we are especially proud of our efforts to complete diabetic retinal imaging within our office. We also work closely with chronic care management and remote patient monitoring companies that allow us to keep a closer pulse on the well-being of our patients between visits.

How has the relationship with payers evolved under value-based care?

Our relationships have grown gradually as more payers have adopted a value-based care approach. Over time, we have seen improvements made with our ability to share and receive information with each payer for more efficient outreach efforts and more concise tracking of our performance with each Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) measure and quality care opportunity. When the initiatives of the payer and the provider are aligned, we realize better patient outcomes with fewer resources.

Can you address the specific relationship with Humana?

Our relationship with Humana has flourished over the last three to five years. Oddly enough, we were able to perform exceptionally well during the strain of COVID and have continued to improve year-over-year. We find our time spent with our Humana provider engagement team to be extremely valuable. The level of analytics Humana is able to provide is quite impressive and helps direct our efforts to be as efficient and meaningful as possible.

How does Humana help your practice in your value-based care journey?

It takes a team. Adding staff to our initiatives to achieve our quality care metrics has led to success. Keeping communication open with each team on how they contribute to the patient's quality of care also plays an integral role in the success of any value-based care program.

What is a lesson your practice learned that led to success?



Accepting the fact that there will always be a certain level of non-compliance is difficult when you are looking to provide the same standard of care to all patients.

Sparking engagement with patients can be a difficult task to accomplish, but it is also very rewarding when you can break through those barriers and help someone complete their preventative screening measures.

What are some outcomes your practice and patients have experienced?



Continuity of care during a pandemic based upon the practices and personnel in place pre-COVID. Having designated employees, outreach protocols and reporting at our fingertips really allowed us to navigate those uncharted territories successfully. At FHMS, our patients can expect a similar experience with any provider they choose to see. We have optimized our electronic medical records to identify the key items that need to be addressed each time a patient steps into our office.

How did being in a value-based arrangement impact your practice operationally during the pandemic?

Limiting our face-to-face encounters during the pandemic, by providing more telehealth services, certainly posed many challenges. We were able to restructure our staff and our approach to offer the same standard of care to our patients regardless of their presence in office.

Certain areas of our value-based arrangement were outside of our control, such as outside facilities being short-staffed and unable to perform certain testing. We chose to focus more heavily on the areas that we could still control and maximize our performance in any way possible.

FHMS put together a special projects team that focused heavily on patient outreach and scheduling efforts. The impact of this initiative was tremendous.

If you could offer your peers one critical piece of advice, what would it be?



Value-based care requires a strong commitment of staffing and practice. There needs to be a wide acceptance of goals and objectives at all levels, including patient expectations of care, in order to achieve success in a value-based arrangement.