

Health Home Interim Report to Congress: Phase II Evaluation Activities

NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) and its partner, the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP), are assisting the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) with the 2014 Health Home Interim Report to Congress, as required by Section 2703 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The Report will contain information on the nature, extent, and use of the health home services State plan option, particularly as it pertains to: hospital admission rates, chronic disease management, care coordination for individuals with chronic conditions, program implementation, quality improvements, clinical outcomes, and projected cost savings. NORC is assessing the State plan amendments (SPAs) submitted to CMS and developing and analyzing a baseline sample cohort of program beneficiaries using Medicaid claims and enrollment data. NORC will also collect qualitative data to supplement this quantitative work and gather programmatic details unlikely to be captured otherwise.

Web Survey and Key Stakeholder Interviews

During the summer of 2012, NORC will conduct a web-based survey of States providing the Medicaid health home benefit as well as follow-up discussions with key stakeholders from each program. The items in the survey will span all four domains of study for the Interim Report, including: details on the structure of each health home model and the processes used to design the SPA (e.g., the use of specialists, the chronic conditions covered by the program, and the involvement of key stakeholders in the program design phase); the implementation experience (e.g., the challenges encountered and strategies used to address them); details on the programs' use of health information technology (HIT) (e.g., the use of electronic health records); and information on key outcomes such as cost, care coordination, and quality (e.g., the degree of coordination between physical and behavioral health care).

The survey will be designed to collect information that is conducive to brief responses, including (where appropriate) quantitative details not otherwise captured as part of the baseline data. The responses will lay the foundation for discussions with key decision-makers and State officials that probe for additional details and allow for in-depth discussion of experiences particular to each program.

Site Visits and Focus Groups

In the fall of 2012, NORC will conduct site visits and focus groups with stakeholders involved with the health home model. In consultation with CMS, NORC will select sites that represent a range of service and payment models. Each site visit will likely include discussions with Medicaid administrators and health home staff, key clinical and administrative staff, State agencies, and other stakeholders as identified by CMS. The site visit discussions will likely center on experiences with implementation, use of health IT, changes in workflow, how the health home compares to other ongoing or recent care coordination efforts, and whether there are additional enrollees who might benefit from the program. NORC will conduct focus groups with both providers and enrollees regarding their experiences with issues such as care coordination, patient-centered care, and patients' participation in their own care.

The results of these qualitative data collection efforts will be used to develop content for the Interim Report to Congress that will reflect the complexity and scope of each program. The Report will include descriptions of State programs through cross-cutting summaries based on the key characteristics of State plans. In addition, the Report will include a comprehensive analysis of the lessons learned, goals accomplished, challenges faced, and experiences to date.