

Special Projects | Examples

The Primary Care/Behavioral Health Special Projects Program aims to engage and retain primary care and behavioral health providers in community settings across Massachusetts by supporting innovative on-the-ground projects that advance the ability of community-based providers and provider organizations to succeed in the transition to accountable care.

The project descriptions found below are provided as examples of potential projects, only. These descriptions are intended to assist organizations in conceptualizing and framing potential projects; they are no way meant to define the bounds of topic areas and approaches appropriate for this program. Successful projects can cover a large number of different content areas and populations, and can vary in size and scope, as long as the projects relate to the move towards value-based payment and accountable care. Organizations are strongly encouraged to propose projects that address their own unique circumstances, priorities, and needs, as well as the professional interests of the project's lead provider.

Please note that the projects described below were funded via an earlier program specific to community health centers. The Primary Care/Behavioral Health Special Projects Program seeks applications from both community health centers and community mental health centers.

Integrated Care for High-Risk, Chronic Disease and Special Populations

Projects focused on integrated care advance MassHealth payment reform goals of improved health outcomes and decreased total cost of care by:

- Addressing individual health needs in a comprehensive, coordinated manner
- Facilitating communication between different arms of health care, human services, and community-based supports
- Decreasing the frequency of high-cost emergency care
- Empowering individuals to better understand and address their health

MD

Integrated Behavioral Health Care Management for High-Risk Adults

Building upon the CHC's long-standing commitment to Behavioral Health Integration, with uniquely merged clinical care and administrative structure, the health center aims to improve the value of care for the top 5% most complex patients in their Adult Medicine Clinic. This grant will allow the health center to improve behavioral health and substance use screening, developing patient-centered care plans, and strengthening connections with critical services including substance use disorder, inpatient psychiatric hospitals and basic resource need providers.

Improving the integration of behavioral health and primary care, especially for the people with multiple complex conditions, can help reduce costs and improve the quality of care across the health care system. This type of endeavor directly relates to the goals of MassHealth's payment reform efforts.

MD

Expanding primary care access to HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)

The use of antiretroviral medication to prevent new HIV infections in patients at risk has been shown to be highly effective, however lack of familiarity with this approach among both patients and providers has limited its uptake at the health center. With this grant, the health center will develop clinical protocols and EHR forms to make it easier for clinicians to identify appropriate PrEP candidates and initiate PrEP. The lead physician and other key team members will implement strategies to reach high risk groups, and establish a PrEP panel management system to track key clinical indicators and ensure that PrEP is being prescribed safely and effectively to reduce the burden of HIV in the health center community.

Designing and implementing workflow improvements related to the care of populations with specific health challenges can help reduce the burden of chronic disease, streamline care, and improve provider capacity to care for individual patients. This type of endeavor directly relates to MassHealth's payment reform efforts.

Creating Greater Access

Projects focused on creating greater access advance MassHealth payment reform goals of improved health outcomes and decreased total cost of care by:

- Diminishing geographic and structural obstacles to care
- Empowering providers and the care team to address individual health needs in new and innovative ways
- Allowing health care needs to be met outside of traditional settings and in ways that meet individuals where they are
- Pursuing economies of scale

PA

Q2A – Cue to Action!!

This project, Cue to Action or “Q2A” will expand on the modality of Shared Medical Appointments (SMA), while specifically targeting patients who are on an anti-hypertension regimen to help improve life style changes. This project will help these patients by giving them an outlet to share their personal stories as well as work on their self-empowerment to help them manage their chronic disease.

Creating alternative methods for engaging people in their care can improve health outcomes and consumer engagement, as well as reinvigorate providers by offering a new means of providing care. This type of endeavor directly relates to MassHealth's payment reform efforts.

Improving Practice Operations and Workflow

Projects focused on improving practice operations and workflow advance MassHealth payment reform goals of improved health outcomes and decreased total cost of care by:

- Facilitating opportunities for communication within and across provider settings
- Improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness
- Creating additional time for member-facing interactions

- Enabling providers to understand their role in broader organizational processes

APRN-BC

Development of a Lean Curriculum for Major Quality Improvement Projects

The project will support the creation of standardized work for all future Lean projects at the health center and also complete a Lean project using a new curriculum. A major focus of the project will be to building the curriculum strategies to successfully spread Lean Projects to all sites in the organization. The clinical leadership has already identified major quality improvement projects for the future in which this newly developed curriculum could be used by staff at all levels within the organization.

Establishing systems for practice improvement is very important for continuous improvement cycles, allowing for providers and staff to identify challenges and create solutions. This type of endeavor directly relates to MassHealth's payment reform efforts.

Increasing Provider Engagement and Satisfaction

Projects focused on increasing provider engagement and satisfaction advance MassHealth payment reform goals of improved health outcomes and decreased total cost of care by:

- Creating opportunities for providers to directly impact the well-being of their colleagues
- Improving provider morale across teams
- Encouraging continuing education and professional development
- Fostering provider retention in community settings

MD

Increasing Resiliency to Improve Well-Being and Decrease Burnout in Health Center Providers

The goal of this project is to provide a program at the health center to increase resiliency and decrease burnout in providers. This program will be based on the Mindful Communication Program at the University of Rochester and would include a wellness curriculum (mindfulness and self-awareness exercises), as well as training in communication skills, and additional areas that have been shown to increase resiliency. The lead physician's goals of this project is to improve the health center physician/provider well-being and to increase happiness and satisfaction in their practice of medicine.

Supporting providers with the skills necessary to provide high value care while engaging in self-care is a critical component of a high-functioning organization. This type of endeavor directly relates to MassHealth's payment reform efforts.