Primary Health Center Model

Over the past several years, the Kansas Hospital Association and its members have been crafting an alternative rural health model for Kansas communities. The result of this initiative is the Primary Health Center model. This model offers a sustainable option for rural areas to provide preventive and primary care, chronic disease management and emergency services; serving as an access point, and coordinating care for the individual when higher levels of service are needed. Preliminary analysis suggests that more than 75% of current outpatients could be fully served in the new model, and that percentage would increase with the provision of subacute care.

The Primary Health Center model provides ambulatory, initial assessment and interventional services. The Primary Health Center is open to the community every day of the year to provide the consistent service array most needed and sustainable by the community. It would focus its efforts on the primary care needs of the community. It would further be supported by a robust EMS plan and a formal relationship with a larger partner organization to assist with operational and clinical aspects of delivering services to their community.

The payment method envisioned for this model would incentivize an integrated health system at the local level. KHA has discussed the importance of developing a financing method that recognizes both the need to promote health and value over volume and appropriately funds the local health needs.

Critical to the transformation of the local health system is the ability to coordinate the care of residents throughout the continuum of care provided locally and in the region. This will require dedicated staff and resources currently not adequately recognized in the payment system.

Representative from KHA/KHERF, the Kansas Congressional Delegation, Governor Laura Kelly, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment have discussed this model to the CMS Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation. We envision a collaborative approach engaging federal, state and local governments, governmental and commercial payers, along with industry leaders, to pilot a new model for rural communities. In addition, KHA is working with members of the Kansas Congressional Delegation to introduce legislation that permits alternative rural health care delivery models.

Action Needed

Rural hospitals are a tremendous asset to Kansas, the communities they support, the Kansans they employ and the individual patients they serve. Congress should instruct CMS to provide flexibility and consider alternative rural health models that sustain health care services in rural communities.

More Information

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