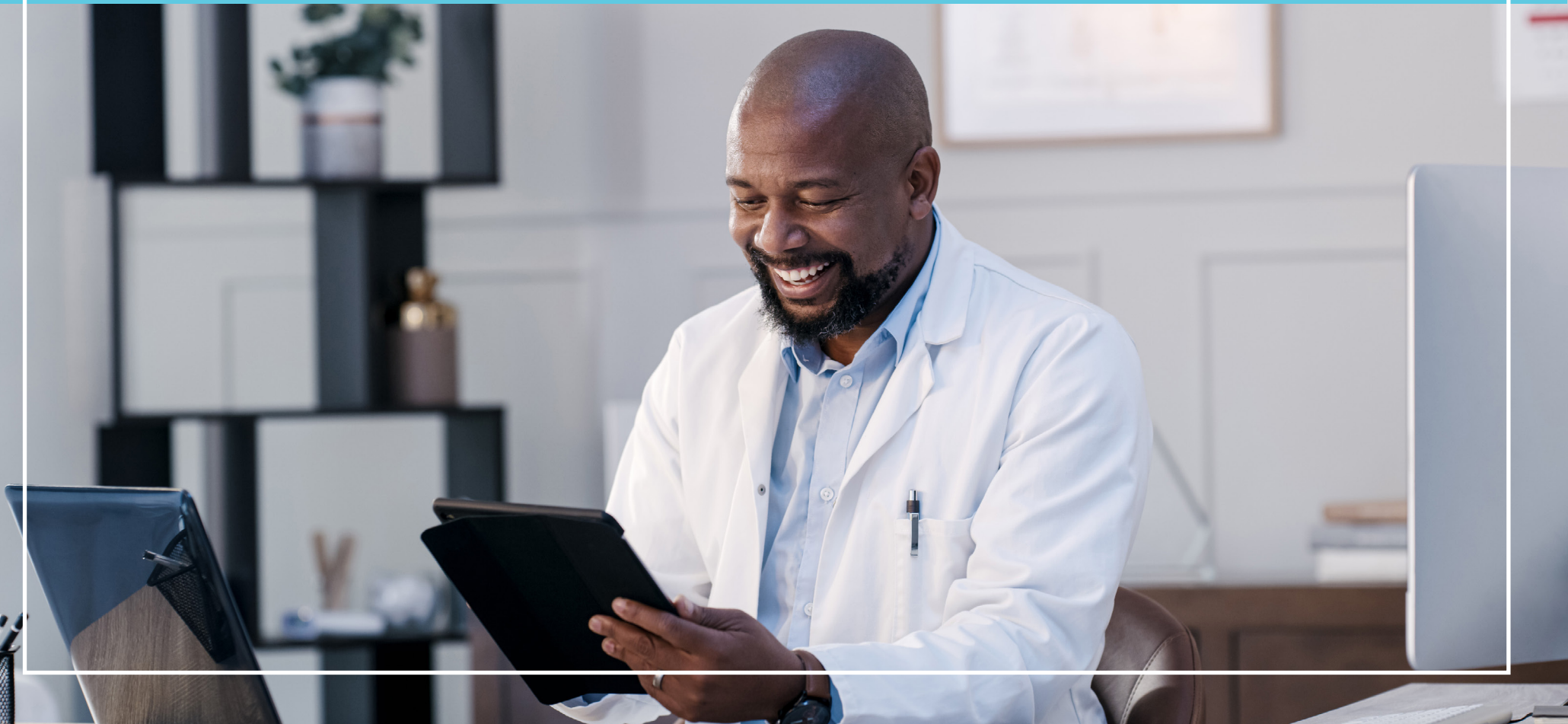




How to Thrive in Your ACO:

5 Steps to Success



What's Inside: ACO Participation Guide

Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) are revolutionizing the healthcare industry by fostering collaboration among providers, streamlining care coordination, and promoting preventive care strategies. In this guide, we will unveil the key steps to achieving quality improvements in healthcare through ACO participation.

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- Step #1: Increase Patient Engagement
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Key Takeaways - Improving Healthcare Quality through ACO Participation

Understanding the Role of ACOs in Healthcare Systems

ACOs HAVE FOUR MAIN GOALS:

- 1 **Improving Healthcare Quality**
- 2 **Increasing the Accessibility and Coordination of Patient Care**
- 3 **Improving Patient Satisfaction**
- 4 **Lowering Healthcare Costs**

The system works to integrate healthcare providers, such as hospitals, physicians, and health insurance providers, under a single umbrella.

By aligning incentives with quality and cost targets, providers and hospitals are incentivized to collaborate more efficiently and achieve common goals. The financial incentives for ACOs include bonuses for reaching quality and cost benchmarks set by payers.

ACOs can also participate in shared savings programs where the providers may receive a portion of the savings from meeting target criteria. The following provides a high-level, step-by-step overview of how practices can act upon the five initiatives that maximize the benefits of ACO participation.

STEP ONE

Increase Patient Engagement

With patient-centered care, providers include patients in medical decision making. Studies have indicated patients who are actively involved in their care make better healthcare choices and are more likely to adhere to treatment goals. Patient engagement has proven to be beneficial in reducing healthcare costs, improving healthcare outcomes, and increasing patient satisfaction.

Patient portals are central to patient engagement. To ensure maximum use of patient portals, providers should:

- ▶ **Educate** patients on how to access the portal and obtain its benefits
- ▶ **Ensure** the portal is user-friendly and accessible, while resolving issues patients have
- ▶ **Encourage** patients to use the portal as a convenient self-service tool by scheduling appointments and requesting refills on their own

To provide patients with the tools to take charge of their healthcare, and stay on track with their personal goals, providers should offer **online education** to:

- ▶ **Teach** patients about proper medication use and guidelines
- ▶ Keep patients **informed** about upcoming appointments and follow-ups
- ▶ **Provide** patients with information about preventive healthcare measures

STEP TWO

Leverage Data Analytics

Practices that harness the power of healthcare data analytics can make meaningful changes to patients' care delivery and achieve the following quality improvement objectives:

1

Informed Clinical Decision-Making - By closely monitoring patient status, providers can intervene and prescribe corrective treatment early, minimizing the chances of costly negative outcomes.

2

Increased Cost Savings - Providers can identify cost savings opportunities by analyzing utilization patterns, identifying high-cost patients or procedures, and implementing targeted interventions to reduce costs.

3

Enhanced Patient Outcomes - By leveraging data analytics, providers can identify high-risk patients, track their progress over time, and implement targeted interventions to improve outcomes.

STEP THREE

Coordinate Care Continuity

The success of ACOs depends on effective coordination and communication amongst providers. The following steps can serve as a foundation to promote effective coordination of care in ACOs.

DEFINE ACO ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clear communication and expectations should be established for each provider to ensure seamless care transitions and continuous patient-centered care delivery.

BUILD A PATIENT-CENTERED CARE PLAN

The care plan is managed more effectively when it is created collaboratively by all healthcare providers involved in the patient's care and is easily accessible and can be updated in real-time.

UTILIZE HEALTH IT TO ENHANCE CARE COORDINATION

Provide training and resources for electronic health records (EHRs), health information exchanges (HIEs), and other health IT systems to facilitate communication and the sharing of patient information amongst providers.

FOSTER COLLABORATION AMONG PROVIDERS

Regular meetings, huddles, and team-based care delivery encourages open communication, problem resolution, and a culture of collaboration.

STEP FOUR

Implement Evidence-Based Medicine

The first step in implementing evidence-based care is to understand what quality improvement (QI) means for ACOs. QI is a systematic approach to improving healthcare that involves identifying areas for improvement, setting goals, and measuring progress toward those goals. The following is an example of how an ACO might implement evidence-based medicine with the goal of reducing hospital admissions.



ANALYZE

the evidence to determine what has been successful in the past and what strategies are expected to be most effective in the current context.



STRATEGIZE

a transitional care program designed to ensure patients have the proper support and monitoring after discharge.



MONITOR AND ADJUST

by collecting data on the outcomes of the strategy implementation and comparing results to the evidence-based goals.

STEP FIVE

Measure Performance

By measuring provider performance on a range of quality metrics, practices can identify areas where providers excel or where opportunities exist. This feedback loop supports continuous quality improvement and encourages best practices for improved provider performance across the network.

The following steps can be used to help guide the process:

Use benchmarking to evaluate performance –

Compare metrics such as staff productivity, revenue per procedure, and profitability to spot opportunities for improvement.

Perform regular audits –

Examine various aspects of the practice, including revenue cycle management, compliance with regulatory requirements, and the quality of patient care.

Conduct independent reviews –

Ask for feedback on practice operations from staff, peers, patients, or healthcare consultants who can provide an objective assessment.

Develop metric-based performance indicators –

Profit margin, patient satisfaction, and quality of patient care are a few of the common key indicators that can be used to measure a practice's efficiency and effectiveness.

Analyze patient data – Measure performance in areas such as patient wait times, appointment cancellations, and no-shows to help identify possible operational inefficiencies that may be contributing to patient dissatisfaction.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Improving Healthcare Quality through ACO Participation

ACOs are revolutionizing the healthcare industry by improving healthcare quality and patient satisfaction, increasing the accessibility and coordination of patient care, and lowering healthcare costs. **Patient engagement is key to successful ACO participation as it helps promote a more proactive approach to healthcare.**

Leveraging data analytics is also essential for maximizing ACO participation as it helps to identify high-risk patients, measure performance, manage populations, identify cost savings opportunities, and improve patient outcomes. Finally, using evidence-based methodology and measuring performance is critical for gauging success and driving future improvement.



ACOs are a way of aligning the interests of patients, providers, and payers. They **create a win-win-win situation**, where patients get better care, providers get rewarded for quality, and payers save money."

- **Mark McClellan**, MD, PhD,
Former administrator of the CMS and director of the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy

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with Advantage ACO

Reach Your ACO Performance Goals with Advantage ACO



Increase Cost Savings



Optimize Patient Outcomes



Improve Care Coordination



Enhance Provider Satisfaction

Advantage ACO provides expert consulting to improve performance, increase revenue, and support practices in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Our ACO offers physician leadership, analytics and reporting, ACO planning, and ongoing personalized support to facilitate the exchange of best practices that seize shared savings opportunities. Find out how our ACO members benefit from reimbursements that boost revenue for their practices – and how you can too!

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