

Behavioral health providers affiliate to aid in transition to value-based payments

Advanced Health Network and Recovery Health Solutions—independent practice associations recently awarded state funding as behavioral health care collaboratives—have entered a strategic affiliation.

The result is a comprehensive behavioral health network across the five boroughs and Nassau and Suffolk counties with 50 providers and 150 locations. The affiliation is expected to aid in value-based payment contracting, said Robert Detor, CEO of Advanced Health Network.

At the beginning of 2018, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said the state would issue \$60 million over three years to mental health and addiction-services providers as part of the state's Medicaid transformation plan. The funds were designed to help providers transition to valued-based payments and were awarded to behavioral health care collaboratives, networks of providers across the state.

Advanced Health Network was awarded about \$4 million through that process, and Recovery Health Solutions banked about \$5 million.

However, Detor said, Advanced Health Network soon realized the money likely wouldn't be sufficient to acquire the appropriate infrastructure and provide the necessary support for operations during the time it takes to bring a new business model to financial sustainability.

"So we started to look for a partner," Detor said. "We went to a number of other behavioral health care collaboratives."

Advanced Health Network was made up of nonprofit providers, and Recovery Health Solutions had many for-profit providers, but the two clicked right away, he said.

The affiliation allows for maintaining two separate awards from the state. It also expands the geographic footprint and improves attractiveness and opportunities for engaging with health plans for value-based payment contracts, Detor said.

One of the expectations from the state is that behavioral health providers are in a better position as a group to engage with managed-care plans and health systems, said Carol Cassell, executive director of Advanced Health Network and Recovery Health Solutions.

It can be challenging for health systems to meet independently with all providers, particularly when it comes to achieving quality metrics, Cassell said. "We come with one voice representative of a large network of providers," she added.

There will be collaboration on the [pilot of Atlas](#), an addiction treatment locator, analysis and standards tool being developed by the nonprofit Shatterproof, she said. The state Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services has partnered with Shatterproof on the development and implementation of Atlas in New York—one of six pilot states—and data collection began this month.

"Building a sustainable model is really a goal here," Cassell said.