

CRAIN'S
Health Pulse

Brooklyn Doctors Create Accountable Care Organization to Build on DSRIP Work

Community Care of Brooklyn Independent Practice Association has become a state Department of Health-certified accountable care organization.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has also approved the ACO to participate in its Medicare Shared Savings Program.

The designation marks the latest value-based payment program the association has entered into with the goal of continuing partnerships, investments and improvements in population health, which began under the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment program. It further positions the group to continue efforts in Brooklyn with or without DSRIP, which is scheduled to come to an end next year unless it's renewed.

As an accountable care organization, the association will work to reduce unnecessary spending and improve quality of care for Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries receiving services at one of 65 participating sites, including hospitals, ambulatory care programs, private practices, federally qualified health centers and behavioral health clinics.

The designation will help the association expand the reach of its DSRIP initiatives and design Medicare-specific resources. It also will provide it with opportunities to earn shared savings that can be reinvested in infrastructure and care processes and distributed among participating providers.

The designation follows the association's establishment last year to continue the progress made by Community Care of Brooklyn Performing Provider System, which is led by Maimonides Medical Center in the DSRIP program. As a separate legal entity, the association can enter into contracts on behalf of its network.

Securing the designation has been contemplated since the beginning of the DSRIP program, said Dr. David Cohen, executive vice president and chair of population health at Maimonides as well as chair of Community Care of Brooklyn and a board member of the association. The program is meant not only to encourage delivery system reform but also payment reform, with a focus on moving into value-based payment agreements to achieve higher quality care at a lower cost.

"It really is about defining a network, helping that network work closely together and providing all of the supports that are needed for the patients and providers to make sure people get the most effective and efficient care," Cohen said. "That's the goal of the DSRIP program, and that is the goal of an ACO."

A focus on Medicare patients, who many times become more vulnerable as they age, was important as well.

"Any transformation effort must include a focus on Medicaid to be successful in Brooklyn, however CCB IPA's mission is to improve the health of all Brooklyn residents, regardless of insurance coverage," said LaRay Brown, chair of the association's board of directors, CEO of One Brooklyn Health System, and president and CEO of Interfaith Medical Center, in a statement. "While we are hopeful that the DSRIP program will continue, we are working now to sustain the relationships and significant progress made over the last five years and are excited to expand the reach of our work to the Medicare population as an ACO."

Other association priorities include the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Bundled Payments for Care Improvement Advanced Initiative at six Brooklyn hospitals as well as oversight of five value-based payment arrangements with Medicaid managed-care organizations.

There are more than 50,000 patients engaged in the association's value-based payment initiatives. That number is expected to grow with the ACO designation.