COVID-19 Primary Care Provider-Focused Assistance

Social distancing and COVID-19 prevention measures have constrained health care provider capacity, resulted in significant business interruptions for health care providers, and created barriers for members of the public to access health care (e.g., transportation, perceptions of safety, the need to quarantine). These barriers are anticipated to persist as the state continues to respond and adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. This package of projects will provide technical assistance concerning telemedicine, financial support and infrastructure support to health care providers, with a focus on primary care providers and community health teams, to address the health care needs of Rhode Islanders vulnerable for COVID-19 and to ensure that providers can continue to meet critical health care needs during the public health emergency.

1. Community Health Teams (CHTs) – Serving High Risk Clients during COVID-19
   1. This project will provide CHTs with financial support to serve patients with complex medical and social needs who are at increased risk for severe SARS-CoV-2 infection. The health and economic effects of the COVID-19 public health emergency have exacerbated the health care needs of these populations, requiring additional support for CHTs.
2. Well-Child Care – Technical Assistance & Performance Improvement
   1. Immunization and lead screening rates among children have fallen as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency, creating a significant risk to public health. The project will provide technical assistance and data to primary care practices to improve immunization and lead screening rates among children.
3. Telemedicine Access and Payment
   1. The project will provide training and infrastructure payments to primary care practices to support their delivery of services through telemedicine modalities, enabling practices to further social distancing measures, reduce unnecessary in-person visits, and thereby mitigate the spread of COVID-19. This will ensure that practices are able to ensure the continuity and quality of care during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The project will also bring to bear technical assistance to refine existing emergency telemedicine policies to ensure they are as effective as possible in maintaining care during the public health emergency.
4. Clinical Care Delivery Redesign Under Prospective Payment – Technical Assistance
   1. The project will provide technical assistance to promote prospective payment as a method to address business interruption costs and structural financial challenges facing primary care practices, who have seen a decrease in revenues and increases in costs as a result of the pandemic. This project will identify modifications needed to be successful under prospective payment, which will thereby maximize the ability of practices to care for patients during the COVID-19 public health emergency.