



## ACO Resilience: Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

### ACCOUNTABLE CARE ORGANIZATION

Carilion Clinic (Doctors Connected)  
<https://www.doctorsconnected.org/>

### Location

Serves a 20-county region across Virginia and southern West Virginia

### Number of Clinicians

More than 1,100 participating and preferred clinicians across more than 150 practice sites

### Aligned Beneficiaries

48,000 Medicare beneficiaries

### Years in Next Gen

2017 - 2020

### Payment Track

Fee-for-Service

### Carilion Clinic's COVID-19 Efforts

Carilion Clinic is a nonprofit health system headquartered in Roanoke, Virginia. Through its Next Generation ACO, Doctor's Connected, Carilion provides care for seniors across central and southwestern Virginia and southern West Virginia.

Early on during the pandemic, Carilion's ACO leveraged its analytics to identify more than 3,000 Medicare beneficiaries who were at a high risk for COVID-19 complications. ACO staff then proactively called the beneficiaries to assist with medication refills, scheduling telehealth visits, and connecting them to local community resources (like area food banks).

Carilion mailed an insert on COVID-19 and coping with anxiety to all Next Generation ACO beneficiaries. Carilion organized efforts with skilled nursing facilities and home health agencies to address capacity and PPE supply chain barriers during the pandemic.

Since March, Carilion has had a dedicated public phone line open Monday through Friday to answer questions about COVID-19. Carilion also partnered with local radio stations and health systems to produce an hour-long special called "Coronavirus: A Community Conversation," designed to share best practices and clinical guidelines with the community. With understanding of the virus still evolving, this information was critical for helping patients remain safe and avoid unnecessary care.

### ACO Infrastructure Helped Carilion Lead the Region's Response to the Pandemic

As we focus on improving the resiliency of our nation's healthcare framework in the aftermath of the pandemic, policymakers should consider the successes of the Next Generation ACO model.

As a participant in the Next Gen model since 2017, Carilion invested in the development of an effective population health infrastructure, enhanced analytics, and care coordination programs.

Carilion's ACO also worked with the health system's technology group to implement data-driven solutions aimed at boosting quality and closing care gaps. Another key focus has led Carilion to work closely with area post-acute care providers to build a collaborative aimed at delivering higher quality care at a lower cost.

All of the resources that Carilion developed to become an effective ACO also empowered it to effectively lead the region's response to an unprecedented pandemic.

Congress and the Administration must ensure that total cost of care models—like the Next Generation ACO model—continue to be part of our nation's public health system.