



ACO Resilience: Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic



Accountable Care Organization

Mary Washington Health Alliance Accountable Care Organization

<http://www.mwmd-aco.com/>



Location

Fredericksburg, VA



Number of Clinicians

500 Physicians



Aligned Beneficiaries

13,000 Medicare beneficiaries



Years in Next Gen

2018 - Present



Payment Model

Population-Based Payment; Skilled Nursing Facility 3-Day Stay Waiver

Mary Washington Health Alliance Accountable Care Organization's COVID-19 Efforts: Maintaining Primary Care in a Pandemic

Mary Washington Health Alliance Accountable Care Organization (Mary Washington ACO) serves 13,000 Medicare beneficiaries in Fredericksburg, Virginia. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mary Washington ACO realized it would be particularly challenging to maintain pre-pandemic levels of preventive care services.

Preventive care services are an essential element of patient care, as effectively managing chronic conditions improves patient outcomes and reduces burden on the health care system. Mary Washington ACO acted quickly to ensure that its beneficiaries could easily seek these important services, including Annual Wellness Visits (AWVs) and other evaluation and management (E&M) visits.

Recognizing that many patients were afraid to leave their homes during the pandemic, Mary Washington ACO adapted to provide preventive telehealth visits and check-ins with beneficiaries via phone. To incentivize preventive care, Mary Washington ACO used a two-pronged approach: patient outreach and provider incentives. First, Mary Washington ACO identified high-risk beneficiaries, based on their chronic health conditions and health care utilization patterns. Mary Washington

ACO enrolled these high-risk beneficiaries in a Care Coordination Program to better manage their conditions and to intervene as early as necessary.

Second, Mary Washington ACO established incentives for its providers to prioritize preventive care services. Mary Washington ACO encouraged providers to perform the requirements for AWVs in conjunction with additional care planning during the beneficiary's visit. Providers received incentives for coordinating preventive care and for managing complex medical conditions.

As a result of this data-driven patient outreach and aligned incentive structure, Mary Washington ACO maintained its AWV participation levels at near-parity with pre-pandemic levels. This achievement will continue to improve patient health long after the pandemic ends.

NextGen ACO Waivers Enabled Effective Incentive Structures

Next Generation ACOs have access to fraud and abuse waivers, giving ACOs and their participants greater flexibility to enter into innovative contractual arrangements. The fraud and abuse waivers available to Next Generation ACOs enabled Mary Washington ACO to design and implement incentives for their contracted physicians that encourage higher rates of primary care services and an emphasis on prevention.