

Medicaid Health Plan Community Partnership Series

# HealthPartners: OnSite Community Care for the Most Vulnerable

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As state Medicaid programs are increasingly shifting beneficiaries into managed care organizations (MCOs), some MCOs are expanding their traditional role to better meet the needs of their vulnerable members and communities. This case study is one of a series that describes how select MCOs are addressing myriad barriers and changing the way care is delivered through community engagement and partnerships. The purpose was to identify examples of successful or promising approaches, internal and state policy drivers that motivated the MCOs, challenges they faced, and lessons learned. This Synthesis Report summarizing strategies, lessons for other MCOs serving vulnerable populations, key “ingredients” for successful MCO community partnerships, and policy implications for state policymakers from the four case studies in this series will be available at <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/Publications/IssueBriefs/2013/Apr/ForgingCommunityPartnerships-to-Improve-Care.aspx?omnicid=20>

## Abstract

HealthPartners, a consumer-governed nonprofit organization in Minnesota that is both a health system and an insurer, integrates clinical teams with services delivered in the community to better coordinate care and ensure that vulnerable seniors have access to needed services. They bring clinical teams to nursing facilities, an adult day care center, and a low-income housing complex to provide health assessments, clinical care, care coordination, and transition assistance to the most vulnerable Medicaid members.

## Background and Drivers

HealthPartners is a consumer-governed nonprofit organization in Minnesota, founded in 1957, that is both a health system and an insurer. Its medical group consists of 70 medical and dental clinics, 17 pharmacies, 780 physicians including 350 primary care physicians, and 60 dentists. The organization also operates four hospitals in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The HealthPartners health plan has 1.4 million members in total nationwide, with a network of 38,000 care providers in Minnesota, western Wisconsin, South Dakota, and North Dakota.

Minnesota’s Medicaid program has contracted with managed care organizations since the 1980s and with HealthPartners since the mid-1980s. HealthPartners currently covers about 84,000 Medicaid enrollees in the state, about 61,000 of whom are enrolled in traditional Medicaid, 18,000 in the state





year to 12% two years later. HealthPartners has also developed contracts with a number of long term care facilities with incentives for quality outcomes. These contracts reward facilities if they meet agreed upon improvement targets or maintain improvements, e.g. preventing decubitus ulcers and prevention of falls with injury.

## Integrating Clinical Care with Senior Day Care for People with Alzheimer 's and Dementia

Through a partnership with the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, which provides a range of health and human services to vulnerable populations, HealthPartners places a geriatrician, a geriatric nurse practitioner, and a case manager in an adult day health center to provide and help coordinate behavioral health and medical care for patients with Alzheimer disease and dementia. This program is similar to the PACE model of care, emphasizing the day center as the most appropriate location to manage a frail population of elders. The HealthPartners onsite team provides care for approximately 28% of those attending the center, including both dual eligible individuals and patients who are only Medicare or Medicaid eligible.

The program makes it unnecessary for vulnerable patients to travel to an outpatient clinic, and providers are available to reassess patients in a timely manner when center staff are concerned about a change in condition. The HealthPartners providers hold monthly team-based interdisciplinary meetings with all relevant caregivers at the site to assess individual patients. The Foundation has also supported the effort by allowing their center staff to take the additional time necessary to coordinate care with the geriatric onsite team. HealthPartners has worked with the organization to train staff to become more aware of changes in patients' health status.

While the Foundation provides space for these meetings and for exams, the providers are also able to circulate in the facility to make assessments and provide care wherever patients are. Family members are included in the assessment process, which the teams have found leads to better communication about patients' progress on their plans of care. HealthPartners is also working to provide more robust advance directive counseling to patients. As a result of interest from the Foundation, HealthPartners is facilitating training for Foundation staff on the Respecting Choices Model of Advance Care Planning, a formal advance care planning process intended to ensure that patient choices are honored and communication is strengthened.

To date, HealthPartners does not have data to show improvements in health outcomes, though it plans to shift its focus to outcome-based measures. However, Wilder Foundation interviewees support the program strongly and cite the monthly team-based meetings as valuable to improving care, and the on site nurse practitioner as being effective in identifying problems early, preventing hospital visits, and easing the burden on family caregivers.

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<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.wilder.org/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> See <http://respectingchoices.org/>

## Providing Onsite Care in Low -Income Housing

In a partnership with Presbyterian Homes and Services, which offers an array of housing options for seniors in Minnesota and the Midwest, HealthPartners provides on-site

