

Building Partnerships: Health Plans and Community-Based Organizations

Individuals with disabilities, especially dually eligible beneficiaries, often face a multitude of social and health challenges as a result of interfacing social determinants of health. Challenges may include social isolation due to limited access to the community, financial challenges due to limited income, unstable housing, and unreliable transportation for accessing care and social activities. As a result, these participants rely on multiple systems of support, including health care, social services, housing, and financial supports. It's rare that one organization can address all of these needs.

Partnerships between providers, health plans, health systems, and community-based organizations (CBOs) can help to meet the varied needs of this population by addressing social determinants of health and offering a more comprehensive system of care. In addition to meeting the needs of the participant, these partnerships also deliver preventive and cost-effective services. Partnerships are facilitated by a formal contract or memorandum of understanding (MOU) between two or more organizations, with the aim of leveraging services and resources to deliver better and more specialized care. Given their complementary nature, each partner plays an integral role by bringing their own unique competencies, skills, and perspectives. Examples of specialized services that partnerships may offer include:

- Nutritionally-tailored meal services,
- Community-based care management services,
- Transportation services, and
- Medical respite programs.

The motivations and challenges that drive the design and development of a partnership are unique in each situation; however, there are some general strategies stakeholders can follow to prepare. First, organizations should assess the needs of their population and the existing gaps in care. Subsequently, organizations interested in forming partnerships should conduct an internal organizational readiness assessment to better understand their capacity to partner. Areas of assessment should include the organization's:

- Adaptability and change readiness,
- Leadership and governance,
- Operations and management,
- Financial and business acumen,
- Program and service redesign, and
- Technology systems and data literacy.

Such assessments need to be completed prior to commencing the partnership, as well as periodically throughout the duration of the partnership. In addition to completing an internal organizational readiness assessment, a potential partnership assessment will help to identify the primary challenges the partnership may need to address.

Once the goals and desired results of the partnership are identified, the external market can be assessed for potential partnering opportunities. Several considerations should be made before pursuing a partnership, including each stakeholder's organizational culture, mission, strengths, needs, and ability to make financial and human capital investments to support the partnership's work. Finally, before finalizing a contract or MOU, leadership from each stakeholder should agree upon the objectives and

goals of the partnership, as well as the services to be provided.

***For more information and resources on Disability-Competent Care, please visit
<https://www.resourcesforintegratedcare.com/concepts/disability-competent-care>***

***To view a webinar related to this topic, please visit
https://resourcesforintegratedcare.com/DisabilityCompetentCare/2018_DCC_Webinar_Series/Building_Partnerships***

The Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office (MMCO) in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) seeks to ensure that beneficiaries enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid have access to seamless, high-quality health care that includes the full range of covered services in both programs. This summary is intended to support health plans and providers in integrating and coordinating care for dually eligible beneficiaries. It does not convey current or anticipated health plan or provider requirements. For additional information, please go to <https://www.resourcesforintegratedcare.com>