

Another Successful Texas MCO Learning Collaborative: Advancing Alternative Payment Models that Address Non-Medical Drivers of Health

October 2023 - With funding from the [Episcopal Health Foundation \(EHF\)](#) and the [Michael and Susan Dell Foundation](#), and support from the Health and Human Services Commission, the Texas Association of Health Plans and the Texas Association of Community Health Plans; [Treaty Oak Strategies](#) and the [Center for Health Care Strategies](#) facilitated another successful meeting of the [Medicaid Managed Care \(MCO\) Non-Medical Drivers of Health \(NMDOH\) Learning Collaborative \(LC\)](#). You can view additional meeting details including slides [here](#).

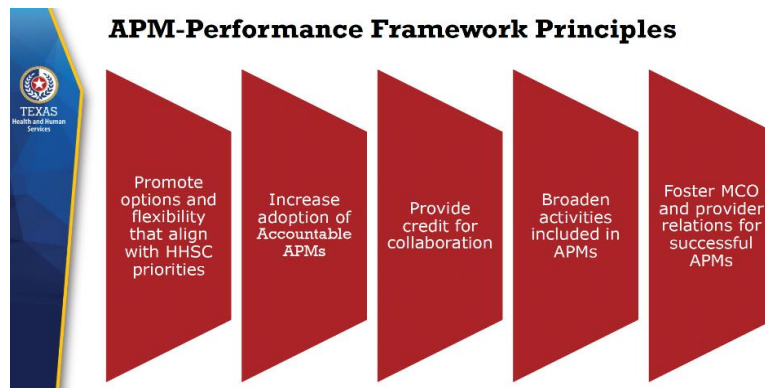
This marks the second in-person meeting in Year 4 of the LC, with record attendance. Dr. Ann Barnes, the CEO of EHF, and Kay Ghahremani, the CEO of TACHP, kicked off the meeting with opening statements highlighting the work we have accomplished over the past years. Dr. Barnes let everyone know that the EHF Board has approved funding for a 5th year!

The LC is the result of strong and evolving collaboration by a group of health sector stakeholders aimed at implementing strategies to address NMDOH root causes of poor health and well-being for people across the state of Texas.

This meeting focused on ways to advance alternative payment models (APMs) that include options to address NMDOH. In addition, the LC received an update from HHSC on several initiatives, and updates from the MCO NMDOH LC workgroups.

HHSC launched their [NMDOH Action](#) plan earlier this year. They shared with LC attendees that CMS has approved new NMDOH measures for State Directed Payment Programs for SFY 2024 and noted HHSC plans to implement STAR+PLUS social needs screening requirements in September 2024. Of special interest to all attendees, HHSC gave an **update on implementation of [House Bill 1575](#)**, which recently passed the Texas Legislature and requires HHSC to develop standardized NMDOH screening questions for MCOs and to collect data and to allow community health workers and doulas to bill Medicaid for certain case management services. HHSC shared that they are currently developing these screening questions. They plan to solicit feedback and finalize the screening questions in the coming months, targeting a 2024 implementation.

HHSC's Quality Director Jimmy Blanton provided an **update on the new HHSC Medicaid Managed Care Organization APM Framework**. The agency is working to implement phase 3, which is based on five principles:



There are several provider groups in Texas that have developed or are in the process of implementing **clinically integrated networks (CINs)**, including the [Texas Association of Community Health Centers \(TACHC\)](#), [Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals \(TORCH\)](#), and [Texas CPESN pharmacy providers](#). The LC heard from each and the discussions were of great interest to LC attendees. It appears this is just the beginning of a conversation on **how CINs can be leveraged to help advance APMs and provide support to providers in collaborating with payors on APMs**. Dr. McNabb with Texas CPESN closed with a case study demonstrating the unique role pharmacies, especially rural pharmacists, can play to help identify health related needs and help close care gaps.

The **Centers for Health Care Strategies** brought a national perspective to the discussion with their overview of **state trends and new approaches to financing NMDOH services and interventions through Medicaid Managed Care and value-based payments**. They offered background on several models, including the Healthy Opportunities Pilots in North Carolina, new managed care requirements in Ohio, and Arizona's Housing and Health Opportunities demonstration. The **overarching takeaway is the concerted focus on addressing NMDOH by state Medicaid agencies**, which provides an opportunity to identify new initiatives and learn what is working. See CHCS' presentation for details.

This year the LC decided to create workgroups to allow the opportunity for LC participants to dig deeper into key issues. Each LC workgroup leader shared highlights.

- **Data Sharing Workgroup:** This workgroup is bringing together MCOs and providers to improve the attribution process for Medicaid member assignment to a primary care provider, an important goal to help support APMs in the future. Additionally, this workgroup plans to review the data landscape for what is available with respect to NMDOH in Texas Medicaid, including how data flows between MCOs, providers, and others.
- **Addressing Food Insecurity Workgroup:** This workgroup is working to develop a model MCO referral process to food banks. The workgroup will also work to support Food RX programs and work with MCOs and providers to identify key quality metrics to evaluate outcomes of these programs.
- **CHW and HB 1575 Workgroup:** This workgroup was established to help support implementation and contracting with CHW programs in Texas. Since HB 1575 passed this last session the main goal of this workgroup for the moment is to support effective implementation of HB 1575. The workgroup developed initial recommendations including the following key recs:
 - MCOs currently have screening questions integrated into their initial risk assessment and processes are triggered based on how those questions. It is important that HHSC provides MCOs with standardized screening questions but also allows flexibility for the MCOs to integrate the standardized questions into existing processes and not disrupt existing workflows.
 - It is very important that HHSC finalize CHW and doula enrollment requirements and start provider enrollment in advance of the benefit going live. Also, it is essential that doulas and CHWs are given extensive training and assistance with the enrollment process.

Shao-Chee Sim with the Episcopal Health Foundation closed the LC meeting with an update on three new reports funded by EHF that will be highlighted during the next LC webinar in late October:

- [*Early Approaches to Community-Based Organization Networks and Community Care Hubs to Address the NMDOH in Texas, Center for Health Care Strategies*](#)
- [*Accountable Health Communities Model: Sustainability in Texas, UT Health Houston*](#)
- [*Value of Investing in Social Determinants of Health Toolkit*](#), Institute for Medicaid Innovation

Thanks again to the Episcopal Health Foundation and the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation for funding this important initiative and to all the partners that make the Learning Collaborative a success!

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