

News Release
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NAACOS Names Quality Excellence Award Winners *ACOs Recognized for Superior Efforts to Improve Care Delivery*

WASHINGTON — The National Association of Accountable Care Organizations (NAACOS) will recognize three members for their outstanding work to improve patient care in their communities. Delaware Valley ACO, University of California, San Francisco, and Southwestern Health Resources are winners of the 2023 Leaders in Quality Excellence Award and will receive awards at the Spring 2023 NAACOS Conference.

The award recognizes ACOs working to improve the quality and safety of patient care and to advance population health goals. From the field of ACOs submitting projects, the NAACOS Quality Committee, chaired by Ashish Parikh, chief quality officer of VillageMD, selected the top three to showcase the quality improvement efforts undertaken by NAACOS members and to disseminate best practices. The three winners exemplify how ACOs across the country are improving care by addressing end-of-life care, intervening in health disparities, and leveraging large data sets to identify high-risk patients. Awardees will share highlights from their work at a breakout session on Thursday, May 4th from 10:30 a.m.– noon ET.

[More information about their work is available online.](#)

Delaware Valley ACO — Showed a roughly \$9,000 per patient return on investment in the last 90 days of life through a comprehensive community-based palliative care strategy. Along with providing more positive end-of-life experiences for patients and families, providing home-based palliative care to patients before death reduced emergency department visits by 35 percent, inpatient admissions by 51 percent, and inpatient length of stay by 1.5 days. The program also increased the percentage of the ACO's seriously ill population with an advance care plan from 25 percent to 46 percent.

University of California, San Francisco — Significantly narrowed disparities in blood pressure control among Black patients to 73.1 percent, compared to 74.3 percent of the overall population. The ACO leveraged data and registries to identify Black patients with hypertension, since that group had the highest rate of uncontrolled hypertension among all racial and ethnic groups. Patients with uncontrolled hypertension were offered a 2- to 3-month intensive program with telehealth pharmacist visits to review medication management and coaching from health care navigators to support smoking cessation and other healthy behaviors associated with controlling hypertension.

Southwestern Health Resources — Reduced unplanned hospital admissions among patients who received complex care management by using a machine learning platform the ACO developed to help predict patients likely to incur a preventable event such as unplanned hospital admissions, emergency department high utilization, or death. The ACO plans to scale the intervention, setting a goal to engage 1,800 patients by the end of 2023. An anticipated success rate of 80 percent would avoid 1,440 unplanned hospital admissions, which at an estimated average cost of \$15,000 per admission would equate to \$22 million in cost avoidance.

Background on ACOs: ACOs are a market-based solution to fragmented and costly care that empowers local physicians, hospitals, and other providers to work together and take responsibility for improving quality, enhancing patient experience, and reducing waste. Because they take financial accountability for patients' costs, ACOs have incentives for improving beneficiaries' health, including taking action like the Quality Excellence Award winners did. ACOs are designed to reduce Medicare spending and return savings back to the Trust Fund. Additionally, there are benefits to remaining in traditional Medicare, such as the freedom of choice to see any willing provider.

Value-based payment reforms have generated over \$17 billion in gross savings for Medicare over the last decade and improved the quality of care for millions of patients. More than 13 million beneficiaries are cared for by an ACO today, making it far and away the largest alternative payment model in Medicare. Nearly 573,000 physicians and other non-physicians participate in the Medicare Shared Savings Program.

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About NAACOS. The National Association of ACOs (NAACOS) represents more than 8 million beneficiary lives through Medicare's population health-focused payment and delivery models. NAACOS is a member-led and member-owned nonprofit of more than 400 ACOs in Medicare, Medicaid, and commercial insurance working on behalf of health systems and physician provider organizations across the nation to improve quality of care for patients and reduce health care cost.