

Practice Transformation Webinar Questions

From webinars for Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Georgia conducted during January-March 2015 by the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative. This Q&A was prepared by the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative and Telligen. It is not an official CMS FAQ document.

Q: Does a practice need an EHR to participate?

A: No, the data submission options include an option for non-EHR practices. This option will require manual data entry into a web-based registry for the 6 required measures for our network.

Q: Can specialists participate in the PTN?

A: Yes, unlike many previous CMS initiatives focused on primary care, TCPI encourages and invites participation of specialists.

A major focus of the PTN will be to improve the coordination of care among specialists and primary care providers. We welcome specialists, who can work with our PTN participants to more effectively coordinate care across the community of physicians. As our measure set evolves we will look to include those sensitive to care coordination and the process of care transitions between specialists and primary care providers.

As the PTN becomes more fully operationalized, we also expect that both the programmatic focus and the technical support will be even more helpful to the specialists. Our PTN is regional in scope and will be designed to meet the needs of physicians working both within health systems and outside of health systems. It will be providing the support and assistance both primary care providers and specialists will need to thrive in the new world value-based payment models.

Q: Are there measures for specialists?

A: There are currently 6 core measures for our PTN that focus on CMS-identified areas of Diabetes, Asthma and Heart Failure. Our goal is to expand the measure set under the guidance of the PTN Advisory Council and with feedback from PTN participants. Our measure set is starting small on purpose so that standing up the program and data solution across 7,000 providers and 6 states can be as seamless as possible. After the onboarding phase is complete and we reach a steady state of operations this topic and others will be revisited to ensure that specialists are engaged and represented during the entire 4 years of the program. It is important to note that CMS plans to eventually converge on a national PTN measure set to which our local PTN measure set will need to align. For the time being we realize the importance of an expanded set but the operational reality of implementing this program with monthly data requirements in a very short time frame.

Q: What if our practice joins a Medicare ACO during the PTN project timeframe?

A: The goal of the PTN is for provider practices to “thrive” in a value based purchasing environment. If your organization is ready to share risk through an accountable care organization that is great!! You will simply graduate from the program into your ACO arrangement and we will backfill your participation with another practice.

Q: Is there funding provided to participating practices?

A: No, the grant clearly states that no incentive dollars will be offered to participating providers. The intent of the funding is to establish supportive resources for transformation that participants can access free of charge to assist them in their transformation journey. Examples of resources that will be available include: quality improvement advisors (consultants); secure data reports showing provider performance vs. various benchmarks; in-person learning sessions; educational webinars; facilitated subgroups on targeted transformation topics; a centralized infrastructure to collect and disseminate policy feedback, best practices, successes and failures, etc.

Q: Is there a cost to participate in the PTN?

A: No, but there is expectation that participating organization will commit staff resources to the program, i.e., a point of contact, monthly submission of required data, and engagement in the program offerings such as in-person learning sessions.

Q: How do we sign up?

A: We are currently taking email statements of commitment to: nugentm@ihconline.org. Please include the number of providers at your organization and a point of contact. If awarded a PTN grant (expected April 2015), we will need participants to sign a formal charter to participate within 45 days of award.

Q: What are the expectations if we do sign up?

A: Practice expectations are spelled out in the charter which is attached to this document.