

Spotlight: Community Health Workers at Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers

Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers (Camden Coalition) is a non-profit organization committed to improving health outcomes and reducing costs using participant-centered practices. The organization has a team of Community Health Workers (CHWs) on staff to bridge gaps in care for complex populations by helping them navigate the health care system and connecting them to resources. Camden Coalition's approach is particularly useful for plans and providers in addressing the needs of dually eligible beneficiaries, given their higher prevalence of chronic disease.¹ A strong organizational foundation is crucial to the success of the CHW model at Camden Coalition. The purpose of this brief is to describe the organizational components used by Camden Coalition that support CHWs in their efforts to provide coordinated care.

Health plans, health systems, and providers developing a network of CHWs may consider securing or augmenting the following organizational assets to address the needs of dually eligible beneficiaries:

- **Internal support system and training.**
 - Develop structures and processes that allow CHWs to lead discussions and create an environment in which CHWs can voice their opinions. CHWs at Camden Coalition are encouraged to be vocal and recognize that they are leaders within their care teams.
 - Conduct introductory and refresher training courses for CHWs and offer opportunities for professional development. Camden Coalition provides training sessions focused on motivational interviewing, behavioral health, health information exchange, and participant safety.
 - Provide support for CHWs to mitigate challenges they may encounter with participants. Camden Coalition implements a supervisory structure that allows CHWs to reflect on their experiences with participants and obtain support from other care team members in challenging circumstances.
 - Provide benefits designed to avoid burnout. Camden Coalition provides CHWs with financial assistance for counseling services and paid time off based on family commitments and preferences.
- **Consistent tools and resources.**
 - Employ existing concepts or develop new principles that serve as core elements of CHWs' work. For example, CHWs at Camden Coalition use motivational interviewing in their interactions to empower participants to change behavior and take control of their health.

¹ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, *People Enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid*. Retrieved from https://www.cms.gov/Medicare-Medicaid-Coordination/Medicare-and-Medicaid-Coordination/Medicare-Medicaid-Coordination-Office/Downloads/MMCO_Factsheet.pdf

- Develop an internal protocol for best practices related to CHW encounters. CHWs at Camden Coalition rely on the COACH model, a framework for building authentic healing relationships to empower participants to take control of their health.^{2,3} CHWs also employ a backwards planning technique to set goals with individuals that are based on the individual’s priorities.
- **Robust use of data.**
 - Use data from electronic health records to identify participants that would benefit from working alongside a CHW to address care needs. For example, Camden Coalition identifies individuals with frequent hospital admissions using real-time data from the Camden Coalition Health Information Exchange (HIE). The Camden Coalition HIE is a collaborative data-sharing effort across providers in Camden, New Jersey. Having access to such information improves care coordination and reduces gaps in care for participants.
 - Establish a protocol for CHWs to record data from participant encounters and engagement. CHWs at Camden Coalition are encouraged to track information from participant engagement, such as missed follow-up calls, in the Camden Coalition HIE system to ensure that care needs are met and care is coordinated.
 - **Partnerships with local organizations and providers.**
 - CHWs live in the communities they serve and are therefore well-positioned to refer participants to local resources and organizations. The CHWs at Camden Coalition have developed relationships with community organizations—such as food pantries and transportation companies— to ensure they are well-equipped to respond to the needs of participants.
 - Local providers and organizations can be champions of the resources required to sustain a network of CHWs. For example, CHWs use the Camden Coalition HIE to identify individuals in need based on data shared across providers in Camden, New Jersey. Access to shared clinical information provided through such a partnership allows CHWs to facilitate care coordination.
 - **Mechanisms for measuring outcomes.**
 - Measure outcomes of the encounters between CHWs and participants. CHWs at Camden Coalition are assessed based on a dashboard of weekly face-to-face encounters and participant perception of care coordination.
 - Share outcomes with the care team. Camden Coalition shares outcomes with the CHWs, reflects on areas for improvement, and develops goals for addressing improvement areas.

² COACH stands for **C**onnect tasks with vision and priorities; **O**bserve the normal routine; **A**ssume a coaching style; **C**reate a backwards plan; and **H**ighlight progress with data.

³ Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers, *COACH Manual*. Retrieved from https://www.camdenhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/COACHManual_FINAL_WithAppendix_Dec2016.pdf

Additional Resources

These resources provide additional information on Camden Coalition and Community Health Workers:

- **[Camden Coalition COACH Manual](#)**: Care teams in Camden Coalition’s [Care Management program](#) include CHWs, who use a variety of strategies for member engagement. Their “COACH” model manual describes the staffing, training, and techniques used in their program.
- **[Healthcare Hotspotting Project at Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers](#)**: Community Health Workers at Camden Coalition are working to reduce hospital readmissions through the Healthcare Hotspotting initiative. Care team members rely on principles such as motivational interviewing and harm reduction to build authentic healing relationships with patients to improve health outcomes.
- For more information on motivational interviewing, please listen to the Integrated Care in Action podcast on motivational interviewing, [here](#).

The Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office (MMCO) in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) seeks to help beneficiaries dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid have access to seamless, high-quality health care that includes the full range of covered services in both programs. This brief 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/>.