

ACO Learning Collaborative: Addressing Social Determinants of Health

The Institute for Accountable Care and NAACOS are offering a new opportunity for ACOs that are interested in developing and implementing strategies to address Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) to participate in an ACO-led learning collaborative. The collaborative will emphasize peer interaction and shared learning. Participants should be prepared to contribute as well as learn.

The collaborative will begin with an in-person kick-off meeting on Wednesday September 29, 2021, and it will be co-located with the NAACOS Fall conference in Washington, DC. The kick-off meeting will be followed by seven monthly virtual meetings. ACOs that would like to participate in the collaborative must complete a questionnaire to help us understand your organization's capabilities and interests. The questionnaire will serve as your application to the collaborative and is available [here](#).

We have capacity for 30 ACOs to participate in the learning collaborative. We are seeking ACOs that have already begun working on SDOH initiatives. For example, ACOs that have created an initial SDOH strategy but want to develop a more comprehensive strategy, or ACOs that have piloted SDOH programs and now want to expand the scope and reach of these programs, would be good candidates for the collaborative.

If we receive more than 30 requests to participate, we will consider the scope and nature of each ACO's current SDOH initiatives, its commitment to active participation in the collaborative and the date your application is received. Your completed questionnaire will serve as a non-binding letter of intent. We will notify ACOs of their acceptance into the collaborative no later than September 15, 2021. If you have questions about the collaborative please contact us at collaboratives@institute4ac.org.

The initial plan for the learning collaborative curriculum is outlined below. The curriculum is subject to change based on the capabilities and interests of the learning collaborative participants.

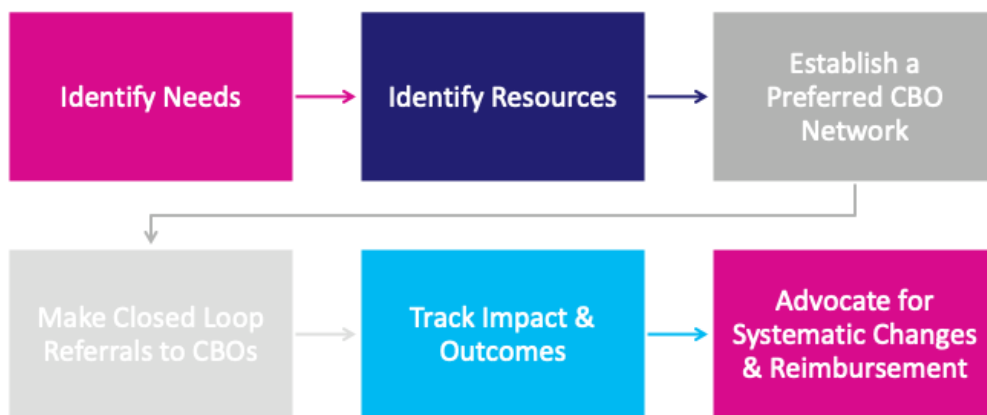
Session 1: Developing a Strategy for Addressing SDOH and Establishing Community Partnerships

The first meeting will be an in-person session on Wednesday September 29th from 1pm – 4pm at the NAACOS Fall conference in Washington, DC. Attendance at the kickoff-meeting is highly recommended because it will give participants an opportunity to begin making connections with peers that will improve the quality of interactions over the duration of the collaborative. The first half of the meeting will focus on establishing a context and framework for developing a high level SDOH strategy.

The second half of the meeting will focus on establishing community partnerships and developing a framework for community partner relationships. The discussion will include topics such as: identification and evaluation of community partners, establishing fair and effective contracts, governance structures, performance metrics, information sharing, incident reporting and closed-loop referral platforms. ACOs are

welcome to bring a community partner to the meeting (limited funding is available to support travel costs for a small number of community partners). Community partners will bring helpful perspectives on the elements of a well-functioning relationship with health systems and common challenges.

Overview of SDOH Strategy



Session 2: Identifying SDOH Needs and Tracking SDOH Data at the Health System and Community Levels

Identifying the right beneficiaries to target for SDOH initiatives is key to closing care gaps and maximizing the benefit of limited resources. Doing so can be challenging in large organizations that include multiple care sites (hospitals, clinics, independent practices) with different methods for collecting and storing information and different information systems that may not share information easily. This session will focus on approaches to establishing effective SDOH screening practices across the care continuum and establishing flows of information across the ACO to identify social needs, make referrals and track outcomes. It will also discuss the use of “z-codes” for potential reimbursement of SDOH services and strategies for moving from identified needs to targeted initiatives. This session will also touch on utilizing types of third-party data that are available and ways to leverage them.

Session 3: Identifying Community Resources, Making Referrals to Community Based Organizations, and Evaluating Closed Loop Referral Platforms

After you have successfully identified social needs among your patients the next step is to identify reliable, high quality community resources to address the needs. Ideally, your ACO will not only refer to community-based organization but know the status and outcome of those referrals. Closed loop community referral systems are information networks intended to help provider groups

facilitate, track and follow-up on community service referrals. Numerous companies such as Aunt Bertha, UniteUS, and NowPow have been established to help identify resources and make referrals. This session will address strategies for identifying community resources, provide an overview of features available on referral platforms, and discuss considerations for when and how to leverage these platforms. Participants will discuss how to determine whether they need to use a platform and what features would be most helpful to their organizations. We will also discuss strategies to facilitate convergence around a single platform within a community.

Session 4: Addressing Health Disparities and Racial Equity

Issues of healthcare access, racial/ethnic disparities and equity are closely linked to SDOH. In this session, we will focus on identifying the links between disparities and SDOH, including the use of data to identify communities with overlapping structural and social needs (also known as ‘hotspotting’). We will also discuss how to embed equity and racial justice into your SDOH strategy, how to build alliances with non-traditional stakeholders to address structural issues in your community and approaches for investing in prevention activities that address the root causes of inequities in your communities.

Session 5: Payer Partnerships and Reimbursement

Medicare Advantage and commercial payers increasingly are investing in programs to address SDOH. A growing number of state Medicaid programs are requiring Medicaid managed care organizations to partner with CBOs. Although such programs can complement existing health system initiatives, they can also create friction when, for example, health plan programs require different workflows that conflict with existing systems. During this session we will increase participants awareness of different payer programs and requirements and help them develop competencies for working with payers on SDOH initiatives.

Session 6: Making the Business Case for Investing in Addressing SDOH

This session will discuss the type and level of investments ACOs need to make to establish capacity to address different types of SDOH and how to make the case for these investments to their executive teams. It will discuss methods for tracking and reporting program outcomes (including financial outcomes), evidence from the research literature about potential cost offsets, methods for assessing return on investment (introducing resources like the Commonwealth Fund’s ROI Calculator to Address SDOH), and common metrics to consider by need area.

Session 7: Enhancing Policy and Regulatory Support for SDOH Initiatives

This session will discuss current and proposed federal policies and initiatives that support incorporation of SDOH approaches to improve health care outcomes. Innovative state and local policies will also be highlighted, as well as other organizations that are active in SDOH advocacy. Participants will be provided with a starter list of opportunities to participate in the SDOH conversation and advised on productive approaches to advocate for change.