

Colorado Beacon Consortium (Grand Junction, CO)



Overview and Goals

The [Colorado Beacon Consortium](#) (CBC) is one of 17 Beacon Communities building and strengthening local health IT infrastructure and testing innovative approaches to make measurable improvements in health, care and cost.

[Meaningful Use](#) of electronic health records (EHR) is the foundation of the exciting work in each community. Funded by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, CBC builds on a strong foundation of care management, collaboration, and connected electronic health records, and was recently selected by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation as one of seven markets participating in the federal Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative. CBC is focused on the following objectives:



- Improving the quality of care for people suffering from chronic disease such as diabetes, and heart disease; to help them better manage their condition and take charge of their health
- Decreasing unnecessary emergency visits and preventable inpatient admissions and readmissions through better coordination of care for patients with co-morbidities
- Expanding a secure health information exchange at the community level to ensure the meaningful use of electronic health records by physicians, nurses, and other providers
- Laying the foundation for a strong collaborative network of community stakeholders that utilizes innovative technologies to engage physicians and patients in the healthcare process

Partners

CBC's major partners include: Mesa County Independent Physicians' Practice Association, Quality Health Network, Rocky Mountain Health Plans, St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, Mesa County Physicians IPA, and University of Colorado Department of Family Medicine.

Colorado Beacon Consortium Background	
Lead grantee	Rocky Mountain Health Plan
Total grant award	\$11,878,279 over three years
Geography	7 Western Colorado counties: Rio Blanco, Pitkin, Garfield, Mesa, Delta, Gunnison, Montrose
# of lives affected by Beacon interventions	258,000
# of providers involved in Beacon interventions	51 primary care sites; 240 team members
# of hospital partners	12
# of insurance partners – Rocky Mountain Health Plans and Colorado Medicaid	2
# of FQHCs and community health clinics	2

“The Colorado Beacon Consortium was key and core to uniting the tribes across transformation activities – the patient-centered medical home, practice transformation, electronic medical records and payment reform. Because of the dynamics happening in that community, the Colorado Beacon Consortium has emerged as one of the leaders in these blended efforts.”

- Paul Grundy, M.D., president of the Patient-Centered Primary Care Collaborative and IBM's global director of health care transformation

Strategies and Achievements

Building and Strengthening Health IT Infrastructure

Approach: CBC is making a significant investment to enhance community health IT infrastructure through widespread EHR adoption, broader information exchange, a clinical data repository, and practice-based and community-level population health registries. CBC’s infrastructure investments build on the existing Quality Health Network (QHN) platform, a health information exchange that provides services to more than 600 western Colorado providers in a 40,000 square mile region. Beacon is helping QHN add new data sources, develop a regional data platform to aggregate and normalize data from disparate sources, and deploy new high-value applications that leverage community-wide interoperability. These applications will focus on delivering usable information to clinicians at the point of care and enabling broad-based population health management, care coordination, and cost-trend management.

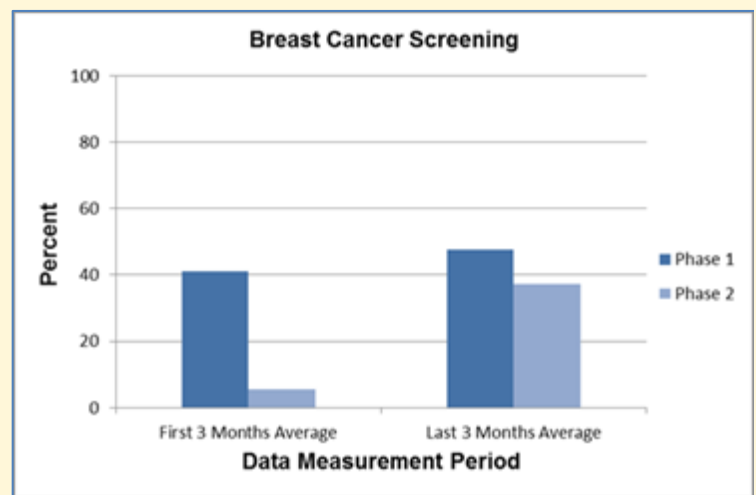
Progress:

- At least \$3.1 million in hospital re-admission costs for Medicaid adults and dual eligible patients, alone, based upon independent analysis by the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing for State Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011. The Colorado Medicaid program has awarded \$2.2 million in shared savings to CBC participants for achievement in this area.
- Since the beginning of the Beacon Program, QHN has added three hospital system interfaces and two reference laboratory system interfaces; upgraded or improved four hospital systems; and developed interfacing for over 30 electronic medical record/practice management (EMR/PM) systems representing approximately 150 providers.
- QHN has begun implementing key portions of its HIT infrastructure expansion plan, including: improved master patient index functionality; data aggregation and warehousing; semantic data normalization; reporting and analytics; and a provider portal.

Improving Health, Care and Costs

Approach: CBC is deploying quality improvement advisors (QIAs) in 51 practices in western Colorado to help practices develop skills and use data for patient activation, better patient outcomes, and population management functions. QIAs regularly review data with the primary care practices to which they are assigned, giving practices the opportunity to monitor their progress as well as identify areas for improvement. For example, a physician may change his approach to dealing with a condition such as obesity if he notices a trend or gap in performance for his a patient population. [Participating practices](#) joined CBC based on their readiness through a flexible “onboarding” process, and work collaboratively to meet quality improvement goals through a series of quarterly [learning collaboratives](#).

Early Results: By the Numbers



Number of patients included in the denominator: 5,373 to 6,049 (Phase 1); and 1,992 to 2,307 (Phase 2)

Progress:

- The first two groups of practices engaged in the program have achieved significant results over the past 12 months. The percentage of ischemic vascular disease patients with LDL levels below 100 (the “bad” cholesterol) increased from 39% to 53%, while tobacco counseling (which involves identifying steps to quit smoking) increased from 25% to more than 50% of all patients.
- Depression-screening rates for patients with diabetes increased from 68% to 92% among the first group of practices and from 40% to 69% in the second group of practices. Screening enables physicians to ensure that patients with depression and those who are at-risk receive appropriate assistance.

Testing Innovative Approaches

Approach: CBC is piloting a new tool which allows patients and their providers to obtain individualized health risk profiles, updated with new clinical data each night, to identify patient risks for heart attack, stroke, colon cancer, breast cancer, lung cancer, and diabetes. These individualized risk scores, along with potential treatment benefits, are presented in a compelling and interactive graphic display which can be used at the point of care to engage and educate patients on the interventions that are most important for them.

Progress:

- CBC is in the process of introducing the risk profiling tool at a third pilot clinic and will substantially expand the pilot by the end of 2012, with an initial target of developing profiles for 25,000-55,000 patients.

For more information on the Colorado Beacon Consortium, visit

<http://www.coloradobeaconconsortium.org/>.

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