

Delta BLUES Beacon Community (Stoneville, MS)



Overview and Goals

[Delta BLUES \(Better Living Utilizing Electronic Systems\) Beacon](#)

[Community](#) is one of 17 ONC-funded 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, and led by the Delta Health Alliance (DHA), Delta BLUES is focused on:



- Improving health outcomes for diabetic patients in the Delta by promoting effective use of EHRs and optimizing care delivery in primary care settings
- Increasing medication adherence rates among diabetic patients by maximizing the contributions of clinical pharmacists and helping patients to develop skills around self-management of chronic disease
- Ensuring seamless, cost-efficient transitions for patients moving from hospital to home by deploying technology-supported staff dedicated to enhanced care coordination
- Fostering community-wide health information exchange by enabling information sharing between hospitals and providers

Partners

The Delta BLUES Beacon's major partners include: DHA, University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy, Mississippi State Medical Association, Mississippi Health Information Network, eQHealth, the Mississippi Department of Health, Northwest Regional Mississippi Medical Center, Greenwood Leflore Hospital, Delta Regional Medical Center, North Sunflower Medical Center, and South Sunflower County Hospital.

Delta BLUES Beacon Community Background	
Total grant award	\$14,666,156 over three years
Lead grantee	Delta Health Alliance
Geography	10 rural counties in the Mississippi Delta
# of lives affected by a Beacon intervention	65,000
# of providers involved in Beacon interventions	70
# of hospital partners	6
# of insurance partners	1
# of FQHCs and community health clinics	11

“The Mississippi BLUES Beacon project is a great start toward transforming the delivery of health care in the Delta. The willingness of so many organizations and providers to work together on this project shows the strength of its potential.”

- Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant

Strategies and Achievements

Building and Strengthening Health IT Infrastructure

Approach: The Delta BLUES Beacon is helping local providers achieve Meaningful Use by upgrading EHR systems to certified software and deploying technical assistance resources focused on meeting requirements. Delta BLUES is also working with telecommunications vendors to address limited broadband availability in the Delta, which prevents many providers from fully utilizing their EHRs. Finally, Beacon is fostering health information exchange (HIE) through a partnership with the state Mississippi Health Information Network (MSHIN). By the end of Beacon, four hospitals and approximately 40 practice locations in the Delta will be exchanging health information via MSHIN.

Progress:

- 146 primary care providers in the region served by the Delta BLUES Beacon have signed up for assistance with the Regional Extension Center (REC) to meet Meaningful Use criteria.
- Broadband infrastructure upgrades have been completed for approximately 30 practices participating in Beacon initiatives.
- Interfaces with the state HIE have been developed for 11 clinics representing over 30 sites and four labs, and providers in these clinics have all received training around how to effectively utilize the HIE.

Improving Health, Care and Costs

Approach: Delta BLUES is training primary care practices to effectively utilize clinical decision support (CDS) tools that help ensure care for diabetic patients is always based on best practices and national care standards. In addition, primary care practices are conducting data-driven quality improvement initiatives around improving care quality for diabetics. Practices work with consultants to review their performance history on key indicators and design strategies to improve results in collaboration with their peers. Delta BLUES is also working to improve medication adherence rates among diabetic patients, by embedding clinical pharmacists within primary care practices who deliver targeted disease state education and review medication needs with patients and providers. Finally, Delta BLUES is focused on reducing avoidable hospital readmissions by enabling successful care transitions for patients moving from hospitalization to primary care. Through a partnership with eQHealth (the Louisiana Quality Improvement Organization), this initiative offers a 45-day coaching program to patients with a primary diagnosis of diabetes, COPD, CHF, or pneumonia discharged from four area hospitals.

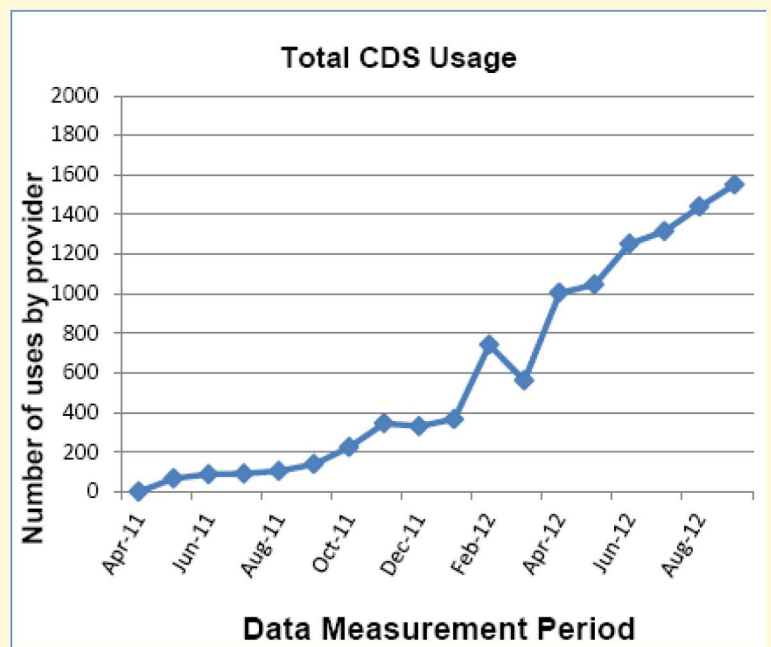
Progress:

- CDS tools have been used in over 10,000 patient encounters to date. Clinics that have embraced CDS have demonstrated improvements in uncontrolled A1C (a measure of blood glucose level) and cholesterol, and have recorded an increase in foot checks, diabetic eye screenings, and other best practices for diabetic care.
- Over 200 patients have received care management services following discharge from a participating hospital through Delta BLUES' care transitions program. Only 2% of these patients have experienced a readmission within 30 days.
- Pharmacists participating in the medication adherence program

Early Results: By the Numbers

Delta BLUES goal is to implement CDS in 28 sites with 57 providers. As of September 2012, it has been implemented in 26 clinics with more than 50 providers. Monthly usage of the tool has increased dramatically as can be seen in the graph below.

Delta BLUES estimates that the total number of patients touched with CDS to date is 10,670.



have found over half of participating patients have a drug therapy problem requiring mitigation by the pharmacist, such as medication that is inadequate to meet treatment goals. Patients participating in this project have seen reductions in their hemoglobin A1C values of up to 2 percentage points, as well as promising results for blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglycerides values.

Testing Innovative Approaches

Approach: The Delta BLUES Beacon is demonstrating how Delta providers can deliver previously unavailable screening resources for diabetic retinopathy. As part of an initiative led by the University of Tennessee Hamilton Eye Institute, six specialized eye screening cameras have been deployed in federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), rural health centers, and independent providers' offices. The Delta BLUES Beacon has provided an eye camera technician to address implementation challenges, consistently produced quality screening images, and trained other technicians on how to produce images that pass the rigorous quality inspection. As a result, patients with diabetes who might not have traveled to an eye doctor will be screened and avoid blindness.

Progress:

- To date over 600 eye screenings have been conducted in four locations and 10% have been identified for medical follow-up.
- Since the inception of the eye camera project, over 1,000 patients have received services through the program, 43 community-based education events have been held, and more than 40 clinicians have received specialized training.

For more information on the Delta Blues Beacon Community, visit:
www.deltahealthalliance.org.

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