

News Release  
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## **NAACOS Presents Inaugural Leaders in Quality Excellence Awards** *ACOs Recognized for Improved Patient Care*

**WASHINGTON** — Essentia Health, Ochsner Accountable Care Network, and Primaria Health were presented with the NAACOS Leaders in Quality Excellence Award, recognized for their outstanding work to improve patient care in their communities. The awards were presented today at the Spring 2021 Conference of the National Association of Accountable Care Organizations (NAACOS).

The distinction recognizes ACOs working to improve the quality and safety of patient care and advance population health goals. From the field of ACOs submitting projects, the NAACOS Quality Committee selected the top three to showcase the quality improvement efforts undertaken by NAACOS members and to disseminate best practices. The three inaugural winners exemplify how ACOs across the country are improving care by addressing food insecurity, making house calls to reduce preventable emergency department (ED) visits, and engaging patients in preventive services.

### **More information about their work [is here.](#)**

Essentia Health developed a screening program to identify patients' social needs, including food insecurity, transportation issues, and financial strain, then matched patients in need with a community health worker to help connect them to community-based resources.

Ochsner Accountable Care Network partnered with telehealth firm Ready to develop a program that dispatches health workers to patients' homes on-demand to reduce preventable ED visits.

Primaria Health launched a Quality Team who proactively reaches out to patients to educate them on the importance of regular visits with their primary care clinician, preventive screenings and chronic disease management.

ACOs are a market-based solution to fragmented and costly care that empowers local physicians, hospitals, and other providers to work together and take responsibility for improving quality, enhancing patient experience, and reducing waste. Because they take financial accountability for patients' costs, ACOs have incentives for improving beneficiaries' health, including taking the actions like Quality Excellence Award winners did.

There are more than 500 Medicare ACOs, including those in the Shared Savings Program and Next Generation ACO Model, caring for nearly 12 million beneficiaries. [In 2019](#), Medicare ACOs produced their highest annual savings to date, generating \$3.2 billion in gross savings and \$1.4 billion in savings after accounting for shared savings payments, shared loss payments, and discounts to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

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**About NAACOS.** The National Association of ACOs (NAACOS) represents more than 12 million beneficiary lives through hundreds of organizations participating in population health-focused payment and delivery models in Medicare, Medicaid, and commercial insurance. Models include the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP), Next Generation ACOs, and alternative payment models supported by a myriad of commercial health plans and Medicare Advantage. NAACOS is a member-led and member-owned nonprofit organization that works to improve quality of care, outcomes, and healthcare cost efficiency.