

News Release

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NAACOS Recognizes Efforts to Improve Quality of Care *ACOs Receive Leaders in Quality Excellence Awards at Spring Conference*

WASHINGTON – The National Association of Accountable Care Organizations (NAACOS) recognized three members for their outstanding work to improve patient care in their communities. St. Joseph’s Health ACO, UNC Health Alliance, and Summit Health were winners of the 2022 Leaders in Quality Excellence Award and received awards at the Spring 2022 NAACOS Conference.

The award recognizes ACOs working to improve the quality and safety of patient care and to advance population health goals. From the field of ACOs submitting projects, the NAACOS Quality Committee, chaired by Megan Reyna of Advocate Aurora Health, selected the top three to showcase the quality improvement efforts undertaken by NAACOS members and to disseminate best practices. The three winners exemplify how ACOs across the country are improving care by addressing skilled nursing readmissions, improving preventive wellness visits, and reducing health disparities in their communities. Awardees will share highlights from their work at a breakout session on April 28th from 10:30 a.m.–noon.

More information about their work is available [online](#).

St. Joseph’s Health ACO – This ACO was able to decrease readmissions from skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) from 24 percent in 2019 to 15.9 percent in 2021 through a quality improvement program. Mission Health Coordinated Care ACO of St. Joseph’s Health System implemented a post-acute care nurse navigator position to monitor patients at SNFs and collaboratively work with nursing homes on discharge dates, patients’ progress, and to assist with the transition to the home setting.

Summit Health – This project was focused on improving annual wellness visits (AWVs) through education, engagement, and support for primary care providers, care teams, administrators, leadership teams, among others. To sustain the program, they also developed a value-based care boot camp with AWVs representing one of the seven, one-hour education sessions for new providers. By closing care gaps, Summit Health improved preventive quality measure performance. As an example, fall risk screenings increased from 77.7 percent in 2017 to 97.9 percent in 2020, and influenza vaccination rates rose from 78.5 percent in 2017 to 91.1 percent in 2020.

UNC Health Alliance – This project was focused on reducing disparities in COVID-19 vaccination rates in the community. They successfully improved vaccination rates for those with social vulnerabilities by

using tools to target vulnerable populations with varying forms of outreach, including automated calls/texts, direct scheduling and mobile vaccine units. As an example, UNC Health Alliance identified transportation needs and access to care close to home as critical to their success.

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 action like the Quality Excellence Award winners did.

[ACOs have saved](#) Medicare \$13.3 billion in gross savings and \$4.7 billion in net savings since 2012. Importantly, data show that MSSP ACOs provide high quality care to Medicare beneficiaries, achieving an average quality score of 97.8 out of 100 in PY 2020. In 2020 alone, 83 percent of MSSP ACOs saved Medicare money, generating \$4.145 billion in savings compared to their benchmarks, recording the program's best year yet. The MSSP is the largest total cost of care model in Medicare, currently serving nearly a third of traditional Medicare beneficiaries.

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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), Global and Professional Direct Contracting, ACO REACH, 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.