

ACCOUNTABLE CARE COMMUNITIES (ACCS) PROVIDE A MODEL FOR DEVELOPING MULTI-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS HEALTH-RELATED SOCIAL NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS, AS WELL AS THE CAUSES OF THOSE NEEDS AND INEQUITY IN THE COMMUNITY.

Health care spending in the United States continues to rise and our health outcomes often fall short when compared with other high-income countries. This fact, coupled with the growing evidence that health outcomes and overall well-being are determined by much more than medical care and genetic predisposition for disease, has led to a growing movement to address all drivers of health. Beyond medical care, these drivers of health include social and economic factors, the physical environment, and health behaviors. The increased awareness of health-related social needs and their impacts on health outcomes are driving efforts across the country to link health care, social services, and other sectors through partnerships to address the range of community needs affecting health and well-being.

Accountable Care Communities (ACCs) provide a model for developing multi-sector partnerships to address health-related social needs of individuals, as well as the causes of those needs and inequity in the community. These partnerships include representatives from health care, social services, transportation, food systems, public safety/law enforcement, education, housing, and other sectors that play a role in the opportunities people have to live healthy lives. Developing ACC partnerships can be challenging and requires overcoming the siloes these sectors currently exist in.

The initiatives supported by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (see Chapter 3) could reduce several of the barriers to developing ACC partnerships. The standardized screening questions and NCCARE360 resource platform can provide resources that will be consistent across the state and allow ACCs to focus time and funding on other areas of partnership and program development. The Medicaid Healthy Opportunities pilots will provide a laboratory for testing an ACC-style model and financing mechanisms in several communities across the state.

INITIATIVES OF THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COULD REDUCE SEVERAL OF THE BARRIERS TO DEVELOPING ACC PARTNERSHIPS

The recommendations of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine Task Force on Accountable Care Communities seek to support the development of local ACC models throughout North Carolina. The recommendations call on state agencies, health care payers and providers, local health departments, philanthropies, health professional and trade organizations, representatives of local and tribal government, and other stakeholders to lay the groundwork and support ACC development, evaluate the outcomes and equity of state and ACC efforts, and find sustainable ways to support the ongoing work of local partnerships.

With the implementation of these recommendations and the development of ACCs across North Carolina, communities can go a long way to addressing the health-related social needs of their residents. In doing so, our state can advance the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of our communities into the future.