

What Is New? The ACO Investment Model (AIM) Initiative

To achieve better care for patients, the Centers of Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) Innovation Center has developed several new models for healthcare delivery. The Accountable Care Organization (ACO) is one of these. The several types of ACO programs offered by CMS differ based on the providers they involve and their targeted service areas, as illustrated in the following table:

<i>Type of ACO Program in CMS</i>	<i>Initial Start Date</i>	<i>Providers' Characteristics or Service Area</i>
Pioneer ACO model	January 1, 2012	Healthcare organizations & providers who have experiences in coordinating care
Advance Payment ACO	April 1, 2012	Physician-based and rural providers
Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP)	April 1, 2012	Fee-for-service beneficiaries
Comprehensive ESRD Care Initiative	July 1, 2015	Medicare beneficiaries with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD)
ACO Investment Model	January 1, 2016	Encourages new ACOs to form in rural and underserved areas and existing ACOs to move to high risk tracks
Next Generation ACO Model	January 1, 2016 (for 3 performance periods) January 1, 2017 (for 2 performance periods)	Healthcare organization and providers who receive higher levels of financial risk and reward than Pioneer Model and MSSP.

One of the newest ACO initiatives offered by CMS is the **ACO Investment Model (AIM)**. The ACO Investment Model is designed to encourage new ACOs to form in rural/underserved areas, and to encourage existing ACOs to move to high risk tracks. CMS expects that the financial support provided to these ACOs will assist them with the infrastructure investment necessary for improving Medicare beneficiaries' care. To be eligible for the ACO Investment Model, the ACO must meet several criteria. One of these is that the ACO cannot have a hospital as their participant or provider/supplier, unless the hospital is a critical access hospital (CAH) or inpatient prospective payment system (IPPS) hospital with 100 or fewer beds.

So far, we know little about how the ACO model accommodates the unique challenges of RHCs. For this reason, researchers at the University of Central Florida's College of Health and Public Affairs are conducting an NIH-funded study to analyze the performance and outcomes of RHCs, with a particular focus on their participation in ACOs. The research team welcomes the participation of RHC personnel throughout the project. For more information on the "RHCs in ACOs" study, please contact us:

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Reference:

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (2015). Innovation Models. Retrieved from <http://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/index.html#views=models>.