

Medical Home Coordinated Primary Care

The Issue

Proposals for initiating a payment system for medical home/coordinated primary care services are currently circulating in legislative offices and the health care community. Unfortunately, many of these proposals do not include all members of the primary care community. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) has defined primary care as “the provision of integrated, accessible health care services by clinicians who are accountable for addressing a large majority of personal health care needs, developing a sustained partnership with patients, and practicing in the context of family and community,” yet many of the proposed modes are not all inclusive. Indeed, they exclude a very important group of primary care providers: Nurse Practitioners (NP).

Nurse practitioners provide high quality primary care that meets the NCQA standards for the medical home i.e. personal providers, care that is coordinated by that provider that is whole person oriented, coordinated and integrated, of high quality and safe, and will enhance access.

Needed

To include nurse practitioners in legislation authorizing demonstration programs, reimbursement authorization and incentives for participation in medical homes or coordinated primary care practices.

Recommendation

That all legislation, regulation and demonstration models:

1. utilize the IOM definition of primary care in proposed legislation and regulation
2. be designed to allow all licensed primary care providers to serve in this role
3. give special attention to safety net providers who provide care for patients who would not otherwise have access to care
4. should include nurse practitioners in the design and development of such programs.