

Maine Patient Centered Medical Home Pilot Update – March 2009

The Dirigo Health Agency's Maine Quality Forum, *Quality Counts*, and the Maine Health Management Coalition, conveners of the multi-stakeholder Maine Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Pilot, are pleased to announce significant progress on several fronts over the past several months.

Following an initial six-month planning process, a call for practice applications was announced on January 5, resulting in an overwhelmingly positive response from the Maine primary care community. By the close of the application period on February 28, over 50 primary care practices from around the state had submitted an application to participate, reflecting a wide range of practice locations, size, and ownership, and representing nearly one of ten primary care practices across the state. A subcommittee of the PCMH Working Group will be meeting over the next few weeks to select 10 –20 primary care practices for participation in the 3-year Pilot. Practices will be selected by mid to late March using a set of defined selection criteria, including the following:

- Demonstrated leadership for and commitment to the principles of the PCMH model
- Practices that reflect the diversity of PCP practices around the state in terms of practice size, location, and ownership
- Ability to link with and leverage existing improvement opportunities going on across the state, and a demonstrated commitment to teaching.

Following a 6-month “ramp-up” period for obtaining NCQA PPC-PCMH certification and negotiating with payers for the new payment model, selected practices are expected to be active in the Pilot by fall 2009. The ultimate goal of this effort is to sustain and revitalize primary care both to improve health outcomes for all Maine people and to reduce overall healthcare costs.

The PCMH Working Group also met last week to discuss specific options for keeping the patient at the center of the “patient centered” medical home. In an effort to keep the needs of patients and family a central focus of the Pilot, the conveners have invited three consumers to join the PCMH Working Group. With support from the Maine Health Access Foundation, *Quality Counts* also recently completed a series of four consumer focus groups to gain input on the consumer perceptions of the PCMH model. Results from the focus groups underscore the need to change the current payment model to allow practice teams to spend more time communicating with patients, and to find new and innovative ways to coordinate care between visits. A summary of PCMH consumer focus groups can be found in the “Resource Library” section of the QC website at www.mainequalitycounts.org.

The conveners also continue to work with the major payers in the state to identify a new payment model for the Pilot. Anthem BCBS, Aetna, CIGNA, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, and MaineCare have committed to working with Pilot practices to provide alternative payment for primary care that recognizes the infrastructure and system investments needed to deliver care in accordance with the PCMH model and rewards practices for demonstrating high quality and efficient care. The Pilot will be evaluated using a comprehensive approach that includes nationally recognized measures of quality, efficiency, and patient-centered measures of care that reflect the six aims of quality care identified by the Institute of Medicine (i.e. safe, effective, timely, efficient, equitable, and patient-centered care).

Planning and implementation of the Pilot is supported by contributions from the Maine Quality Forum, the Maine Health Management Coalition, Martin's Point Health Care, the Maine Health

Access Foundation, and Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield. A multi-stakeholder PCMH Working Group provides guidance and direction for the Pilot.

Look for regular updates on the PCMH Pilot in e-mails and newsletters from the Maine Medical Association, the Maine Osteopathic Association, Maine Academy of Family Physicians, Maine Chapter of the American College of Physicians and Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, or check the “News” and “Resource Library” sections of the *Quality Counts* website at www.mainequalitycounts.org.