

New National Group Seeks to Promote Cross-Sector Solutions to Health

Supports Allowing Communities to Pursue Demonstrations that Test Whether the Enhanced Alignment of Social and Health Care Programs Can Improve Wellbeing and Reduce Cost of Care

WASHINGTON, DC (March 28, 2018): A group of leading healthcare organizations have joined together to form *Aligning for Health* (AFH), a coalition seeking to improve health outcomes and lower the cost of care by developing a path forward for more effective and coordinated health and human service programs.

Aligning for Health is made up of stakeholders who recognize that health is connected to more than just access to medical services. Studies estimate that social factors such as access to nutritious food, safe housing, and financial security account for nearly 70 percent of all health outcomes, and that addressing such social factors can have positive effects on health outcomes, healthcare costs and utilization.

Important safety-net programs meant to promote well-being are often fragmented, hindering holistic and innovative approaches to addressing consumers' needs, and resulting in complex consumer experiences.

Through a combination of research, direct advocacy, coalition building, and media outreach, AFH seeks to energize stakeholders and policymakers around the need to test the impact of greater integration at the local level, specifically whether it leads to more effective leveraging of federal poverty and healthcare programs to improve well-being and to lower cost of care.

Our primary goal is to develop a consensus-based, bipartisan policy proposal that will allow communities to apply for demonstration programs that permit, with guardrails, the blending and braiding of funds to address social determinants of health.

Aligning for Health has also launched a website, AligningforHealth.org, where we have compiled a number of resources and examples of current innovative efforts to better coordinate and integrate health and human service programs to address social determinants.

AFH members include Alliance for Better Health, Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, CareSource, Humana, Maxim Healthcare Services, Solera Health, UPMC Health Plan, WellCare.

For inquiries, call Krista Drobac at 202.415-3260, or via email at KDrobac@aligningforhealth.org

“As a nonprofit health care company, CareSource has long been committed to helping our members achieve self-sufficiency,” said Karin VanZant, Vice President, Life Services at CareSource. “We are proud to be a member of Aligning for Health and to work with the organization to develop policy that effectively addresses the social determinants of health.”

“For many of us, health happens outside of the doctor’s office. After all, it’s difficult to prioritize your health when you don’t have access to healthy food, safe housing or transportation to and from medical appointments,” said Rhonda Mims, Senior Vice President and Chief Public Affairs Officer, WellCare Health Plans. “Addressing the social determinants of health that limit access to affordable, quality healthcare requires collaboration from all stakeholders. We look forward to working with Aligning for Health and our government partners to develop and promote innovative solutions at both the state and federal level to help our members, their families and the communities we serve live better, healthier lives.”

“Every day, Americans find themselves without access to critical medical care, healthy foods and safe housing, which leads to significant health risks,” said Kim Holland, vice president, state affairs for Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. “That’s why we’re proud to work with Aligning for Health to enact real change that will improve the overall well-being and health of our citizens while ensuring the efficient use of resources.

“During my tenure as Colorado’s Medicaid director, I was struck by the complex interdependence between poverty, health status, built environment, education, behaviors, stress, economic opportunity, food, and housing,” said Sandeep Wadhwa, MD, chief health officer of Solera Health. “I support this effort to link complementary initiatives to measurably improve health and self-sufficiency.”

“At Maxim Healthcare Services, we are prioritizing community-based care and social determinant solutions for our patients and clients. In fact, we have effectively used these tools to help reduce readmissions by over 65% for high risk patients. Since this has been a focus for our organization, membership in the Aligning for Health group was a perfect complement to the work that we were

already doing to better serve these more vulnerable patient populations.” -Andy Friedell, Senior Vice President of Strategic Solutions & Government Affairs.”

“For many years, UPMC Health Plan has worked to address the factors outside of health care that have such a huge impact on the overall well-being of those we serve,” said John Lovelace, president of government programs at UPMC Health Plan. “Our programs such as Cultivating Health for Success, that provides disabled and homeless individuals with stable housing and an assigned medical home with intensive care management, have shown a positive impact on individuals and in our communities. We look forward to collaborating with colleagues to achieve an even greater impact, one that resonates with our mission and the people we serve.”