For ACHE Face-to-Face Education Credits

Accountability for the Care We Provide

Length: 1.5 hours

Target Audience: C-suite, vice presidents and directors who are focused on reimbursement, healthcare reform, strategic planning, business operations or medical affairs

Description: As healthcare reform is drastically changing the landscape, healthcare leaders are preparing their organizations not only to meet the requirements outlined in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act but also to thrive in the midst of tremendous change. Among the many provisions outlined in the act, few have received more attention than the provision regarding accountable care organizations (ACOs). While the healthcare field is showing strong interest in accountability, much uncertainty surrounds the formation of ACOs.

As networks composed of hospitals, providers and insurers sharing the responsibility for care, ACOs highlight the importance of the continuum of care and attempt to reduce the cost of healthcare by linking payments to outcomes. If successful, ACOs will revolutionize the American healthcare delivery system. But the regulations that will govern them and the outcomes of the demonstration projects are causing much debate.

Faculty: Moderator and two to three panelists. The moderator should be a high-level healthcare executive with extensive knowledge of the new healthcare reform legislation and the operations of healthcare organizations at the strategic and business levels.

The panel should be composed of a diverse group of individuals and could include a hospital C-suite executive; a legislator or legislative aide who is well versed in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; a senior-level executive of strategy or operations; and a high-level clinical individual, such as a chief medical officer or medical director. A healthcare attorney may also be a good addition to the panel.
Topics for Discussion:

- The effects of accountable care on patient care
- Payment structures within accountable care
- Coordination of care
- Clinical alignment and integration
- ACO regulations related to the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP)
- Key elements/functions of ACOs
  - ACO governing body
  - ACO management organization and requirements
  - ACO participants and requirements for participation
  - ACO participants’ interactions with Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries
  - ACO risks and rewards
- Antitrust analysis
- Shared Savings Program payments
- Performance standards and scores
- Quality standards and benchmarking
- Savings and loss rates
- Payment withholds and repayment

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is an accountable care organization, including its regulations and requirements, and how has your organization interpreted the reform act’s description of what an ACO should look like?
2. How will the intended outcomes of accountability play out in your hospital and your community?
3. What steps can healthcare providers take now to prepare themselves for accountable care?
4. What are key guidelines and requirements for promoting evidence-based medicine and quality outcomes under MSSP regulations?
5. Physician and clinical alignment is a crucial component to ACOs. How has your organization looked to successfully engage providers to move toward an ACO structure?
6. What are the reporting requirements, including the ACO organizational information, payments to the organization for savings, payments for losses and reinvestment of resources to improve the population’s health, quality of care, cost efficiency and quality performance measures?
7. Where do the medical staff and physician leaders fit in a provider’s desire to be more accountable for the care they provide?
8. How can an ACO best provide a continuum of care? What are the implications for patients of providers being held accountable for their care?
9. What are some common points of hesitation with ACOs, and what should organizations consider when looking at ACO implementation?
10. What are the risks and rewards of being an early adopter? What are the risks and rewards of waiting to get on board?
11. What are the true economic and operational implications of accountable care?

Material for Distribution:


Additional Resources:


American Hospital Association: www.aha.org.
