

Members in Action: Managing Risk & New Payment Models

Trinity Health – Livonia, Mich.

Enhance Value Through National Policies and Social Change

The AHA's Members in Action series highlights how hospitals and health systems are implementing new value-based strategies to improve health care affordability. This includes work to redesign the delivery system, manage risk and new payment models, improve quality and outcomes, and implement operational solutions.

Overview

Trinity Health is advancing health and wellness policies in eight sites across the country through its Transforming Communities Initiative (TCI). Launched in 2016, TCI works in collaboration with local partners to identify and address community health and well-being priorities.

TCI is the first major investment by Trinity Health to employ policy, system and environmental (PSE) change strategies to improve the health of communities. TCI combines grants from Trinity Health with community match dollars to fund community-based policy, system and environmental change initiatives. Specifically, TCI identifies youth tobacco use and childhood obesity and the underlying root causes through national support and local collaboration.

In each community where it implements TCI, Trinity Health contracts with the local Trinity Health hospital and a local community-based organization to provide

Impact

In the first three years, TCI has influenced public policy development related to physical activity and healthy food options in schools, breastfeeding, and age limits for purchasing tobacco and vaping. It also has financially contributed to affordable housing projects, increasing access to fresh and affordable foods in grocery and corner stores, urban gardens, farmers markets and mobile kitchens.

Seven of the eight states passed laws requiring tobacco purchasers be at least 21 years old, affecting 7 million youths between 15 and 17. School wellness policies have been adopted in some communities that promote healthy eating and active living through standardized curriculum that incorporates activity breaks and fun rewards/health celebrations that include items such as pencils, stickers and notepads in lieu of cookies and cupcakes.

Outcome measures are supported by research demonstrating that health policy changes lead to lower rates of smoking and obesity levels. In addition to improving the health of residents in TCI communities, the aim over time is to lower health care costs, reduce hospital visits and readmission rates, and lessen the prevalence of chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.



fiscal management and grant oversight. Six communities receive up to \$450,000 per year and two communities receive up to \$200,000 per year for up to five years. Additionally, communities receive support from national technical assistance providers and Trinity Health subject matter experts.

Each TCI site has a full-time director who convenes local stakeholders to drive health improvement and policy changes at local and statewide levels. Multi-sector collaborators include local residents, schools, law enforcement, housing organizations, businesses, health care providers, public health departments and food banks, among others. Trinity Health also provides low-interest loans, grants and matching funds to support local initiatives.



Each site is required to engage a local evaluator to track progress. The sites are in California, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York. Staff and collaborators also share resources and promising practices across the country.

Lessons Learned

Trinity Health officials learned developing trusting relationships within collaborations and producing results takes time, and that sometimes the focus shifts as the work progresses. For example, in attempting to increase access to physical activity in neighborhoods, a collaborative in Illinois learned that instead of building parks, the community needed to improve lighting in public spaces, reduce violence and foster employment opportunities.



Officials also learned there was greater success when hospital executives actively supported local initiatives. In addition, they learned the importance of engaging residents affected by the policy changes early in the process.

“Many times large organizations go into communities with ideas that don’t work because they never engaged the person who the ideas are going to affect,” said Jaime Dirksen, vice president of community health and well-being.

“Where Trinity Health is trying to solve food insecurity,” she said, “we are engaging individuals who are food insecure and including them in identifying and implementing the solutions, so that change can be lasting. Sustainable change takes a long time to create and establishing trusted relationships with community residents and stakeholders is paramount.”

Future Goals

The TCI’s five-year grant commitment for Trinity Health’s first round of TCI implementation concludes in 2021, although the work and site evaluations will continue to ensure the longevity of programming and inform future initiatives. Future TCI implementation will support similar efforts in different communities, as Trinity Health seeks to continue scaling initiatives that transform health and wellness for the communities it serves.

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