

Key Findings and Recommendations

Medicaid Managed Care Organization (MMCO) Learning Hub

April 1, 2021



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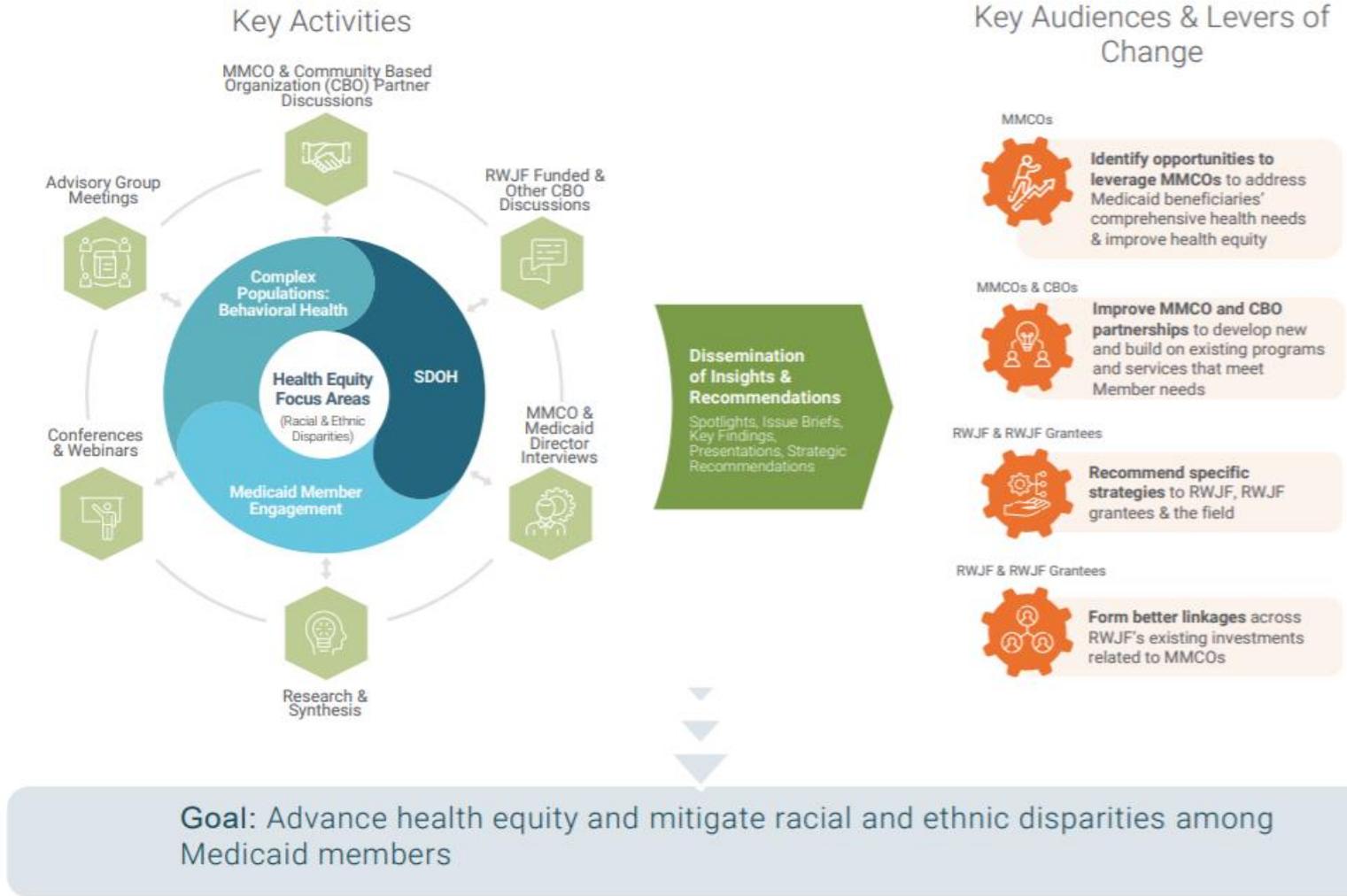
MMCO Learning Hub Overview

Goals of the MMCO Learning Hub

- Advance health equity and reduce the racial and ethnic disparities of Medicaid members with a focus on **social determinants of health (SDOH), behavioral health (BH), and member engagement**
- Identify **barriers and opportunities** for MCOs to better address Medicaid beneficiaries' comprehensive health needs and partner with community-based organizations (CBOs)
- **Form better linkages** across RWJF's existing investments related to MCOs
- **Recommend specific strategies** to RWJF, RWJF grantees, and the field to address health inequities among MCO members



MMCO Learning Hub Visual



Key Year 1 Activities

- **Discussion Groups and Roundtables** with MCO and CBO/advocacy representatives around COVID-19 and its effects on SDOH, BH, and member engagement
- **Webinars**
 - Four-part Managed Care 101 series: MCO basics, financing, Medicaid authorities, and MCO/CBO partnership strategies
 - MCO investments in affordable housing: goals, strategies and community partnerships
- **Industry Convenings**
 - Advisory Group of health care thought leaders to identify challenges and opportunities for engaging MCOs or MCO-adjacent stakeholders
 - Monthly calls with partners: AHIP, ACAP, Community Catalyst and Families USA
- **Information Gathering/Sharing Discussions** with key stakeholders, e.g., MCO and CBO staff, RWJF grantees, RWJF state group, and national groups to understand key trends and issues related to Medicaid managed care, health equity, SDOH, BH, and member engagement

Key Year 1 Deliverables

Webinar Sessions, Slides, Recordings, and Q&As on a managed care overview, Medicaid authorities, MCO financing, MCO partnerships, and MCO housing efforts

COVID-19 Resources on how Medicaid MCOs can respond to COVID-19 and the role of MCOs in COVID-19 vaccinations

Spotlight Series highlighting key SDOH, BH, and member engagement initiatives driven by, or in partnership with, MCOs

Issue Briefs on SDOH trends for MCOs during COVID-19, including deeper dives on food insecurity and homelessness

Portfolio Review examining synergies between RWJF grantees and focused on MCOs to identify opportunities for additional connections/collaboration and identifying gaps in the areas of focus

MMCO Learning Hub [resource website](#) hosting the materials listed above

Key Findings, by MMCO Learning Hub Goal

Focus on SDOH, BH, and Member Engagement

A decorative background graphic on the right side of the slide. It features a radial grid of thin white lines emanating from a central point on the right. Scattered across this grid are several small circles: some are solid white, some are solid orange, and some are hollow with a thin grey outline. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

MCOs and Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

MCOs addressing housing and food insecurity challenges; COVID-19 exacerbated these needs

MCOs leverage partnerships with CBOs who are embedded in communities to address member SDOH needs

- MCOs work with CBOs, often in 'screen and refer' arrangements for food insecurity and housing
- Some MCOs use value-based payment (VBP) and other funding arrangements to support CBOs

Increasingly, MCOs are using technology platforms (e.g., Aunt Bertha, Unite Us) to access SDOH services and ease administrative burdens

- However, there is a huge demand for SDOH, especially with COVID-19 and CBOs are concerned about a lack of resources/funding to meet the need.



Recommendations:

- **More foundation or federal funding/TA to states to grow VBP arrangements between states, MCOs, and/or CBOs to incentivize SDOH services**
- **Foundation support to evaluate MCO SDOH initiatives and assess impact on outcomes**

For more information:

https://www.norc.org/PDFs/Medicaid%20Managed%20Care%20Organization%20Learning%20Hub/MCOLearningHub_KeyFindings_SDOHGroupRoundtableDiscussion_Formatted.pdf

Some MCOs have invested over \$100 million to build affordable housing (e.g., UHC and CVS Health)

Social Impact Investment Strategies:

Equity Investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash • Patient capital for housing, other human services organizations
Below market Loans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low interest loans • Low-income housing tax credits • Working capital funds • Revolving loan funds
Outcomes-based financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay for success • Other outcomes-based financing models

Challenges:

- MCO housing payments are restricted by federal and Medicaid rules
- Large MCOs are not in every market and/or able to meet full demand



Recommendation:

- **RWJF could create a forum for bringing together housing experts, CBOs and MCOs interested in affordable housing to foster innovation, community partnership and spur investments**
- **Federal and state Medicaid agencies should assess the role of Medicaid in affordable housing investments**

MCOs and Behavioral Health (BH)

COVID-19 exacerbated BH needs; technology and other flexibilities helped bridge gaps in access

Telehealth increased access to BH when in-person services were limited

- Provider adoption of telehealth has increased despite initial challenges with transitioning
- Telehealth increases access for some (e.g., those lacking transportation), but further widens disparities for others (e.g., rural residents, disabled)

States implemented other flexibilities that increased access to BH services, e.g., waiving restrictions on delivery of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and loosening requirements for out-of-network providers

For more information:

https://www.norc.org/PDFs/Medicaid%20Managed%20Care%20Organization%20Learning%20Hub/MCOLearningHub_KeyFindings_BHGroupRoundtableDiscussion.pdf



Recommendation:

- **Foundation funding for research into the increased need for SUD and related BH services**
- **States and MCOs should maintain hybrid telehealth/ in-person options for members**
- **The federal gov. and states should maintain these flexibilities implemented during COVID-19 to increase access to BH services**

Workforce shortages and low Medicaid provider reimbursement rates limit access to BH for members

Shortages of psychiatrist, subspecialists, and other BH providers, particularly those who reflect the communities they serve

Varying Medicaid reimbursement and coverage of certain BH providers, including peer supports and recovery community organizations

Law enforcement or emergency departments often handle **crisis responses**, leading to mismanagement of BH needs, increased health care costs, and overuse of the criminal justice system



Recommendation:

- **States should cover non-traditional providers within Medicaid**
- **States should reconsider provider education and certification requirements**
- **Foundations could support additional pilots on early intervention and diversion models for crises (e.g., Crisis NOW model)**

For more information:

https://www.norc.org/PDFs/Medicaid%20Managed%20Care%20Organization%20Learning%20Hub/MCOLearningHub_KeyFindings_BHGroupRoundtableDiscussion.pdf

MCOs and Member Engagement

MCOs experience challenges authentically engaging Medicaid members

Medicaid members' understanding of state, MCO vs provider roles are limited; streamlined coordination across entities is needed to improve member outreach

- Consider models like the 'no wrong door' approach
- State requirements can limit MCO options for member outreach

Engaging members in decision-making processes is challenging and requires bi-directional feedback, valuing members' time, providing training and supports, and reducing differentials in power and resources between MCOs and members

MCOs should build an organizational culture of engagement, which requires organizational and state leadership and partnership, training, readiness assessments



Recommendation:

- **MCOs should develop a learning collaborative to improve member and community engagement strategies and the sharing of best practices**

For more information:

https://www.norc.org/PDFs/Medicaid%20Managed%20Care%20Organization%20Learning%20Hub/MMCOLearningHub_MemberEngagement.pdf

Identify Barriers and Opportunities for MCOs to Better Address Member Needs



MCOs and COVID-19

AmeriSpeak Early Findings on Pandemic Impact: Initial Challenges

At least two-thirds of primary care, specialty care, surgeries, or dentists visits were canceled, delayed, or conducted as telehealth visits

- Dental (52%) and primary care (37%) were the most reported as canceled
- Telehealth visits most commonly replaced primary care (21%) and specialty care (18%)

Over half of respondents from communities of color selected the local health department as a source of health information they would contact about concerns for their health during the pandemic



Recommendation:

- **Foundations should continue to monitor trends in utilization through the pandemic and monitor trusted sources of information for Medicaid MCO members throughout the pandemic**

MCOs responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways:

Acquisition of **personal protective equipment (PPE)** for staff and providers

Financial support to providers with reduced revenues

Outreach to members to connect them to services and telehealth options during quarantine

Increased outreach to members to assess SDOH and COVID-19-related needs

- Provided vaccine information, coordination with providers, and coordination of member vaccination appointments



Recommendation:

- **Ensure MCOs are formally part of state pandemic and public health emergency response efforts**
- **Foundation support for a cross-sector work group to increase coordination and future planning to ensure consistent vaccine messaging going forward**

For more information:

https://www.norc.org/PDFs/Medicaid%20Managed%20Care%20Organization%20Learning%20Hub/MCOLearningHub_MCODiscussion_COVIDVaccination.pdf

MCO-CBO Partnerships

MCO-CBO partnerships are key to meeting member needs, but face administrative and funding challenges

CBOs are trusted entities and can help MCOs identify and meet member and community needs, especially around SDOH

MCOs and CBOs need additional technical assistance to understand how to engage with MCOs, work through administrative and contractual challenges (e.g., HIPAA requirements, complex legal contracts) and funding parameters

Successful partnerships **have a shared vision and governance process**, and a willingness to ensure a fair and sustainable funding model



Recommendation:

- **MCOs and CBOs need additional technical assistance and continued convenings around critical and timely topics, particularly as Medicaid managed care contracts increasingly require SDOH and health equity components**

The Role of Data

Data challenges are a persistent barrier to member engagement and to advancing health equity

Accurate data collection, sharing, and analysis is limited and a major area of interest for MCOs, particularly race/ethnicity and language (REL), and SDOH data

- This data can play a key role in identifying disparities and advancing equity

Incorrect and outdated member contact information makes member outreach difficult

- State restrictions on how member contact fields are updated further restrict access



Recommendation:

- **The Federal government should enhance standards around collection and exchange of REL and SDOH data**
- **States should improve processes and restrictions around updating member contact information in state files and update state policies that restrict how MCOs can communicate with members**

MCOs' Role in Advancing Health Equity

MCO are working to reduce health inequities and are committed to addressing the challenges that persist

MCOs highlight the following strategies for advancing health equity within their organizations:

- Having leadership that supports and prioritizes building a culture of health equity within the organization
- Including health equity in strategic plans, setting milestones, and tracking progress
- Improving collection of and use of data (e.g., REL, SDOH) to identify disparities and tailor interventions
- Conducting training, including on cultural competency, anti-bias, and structural racism
- Hiring staff representative of the communities MCOs serve
- Amplifying consumer voices, including improving efforts towards more authentic member engagement



Recommendation:

- **Foundations could consider convening MCOs to support a consensus around defining and addressing health equity, sharing best practices and lessons learned for advancing health equity**

Collaboration between states, MCOs, health systems/providers, and CBOs is critical in health equity efforts

States, MCOs, health systems, and CBOs can align efforts towards:

- Standardized collection and sharing of REL, SDOH, and member contact data
- Partnerships for implementing and paying for SDOH-related programs and services
- A more diverse pipeline of medical students and other providers, and reducing barriers to education and/or certification for underrepresented populations
- Use of non-traditional providers (e.g., CHWs, navigators, etc.)



Recommendation:

- **Foundation support for a cross-sectoral workgroup of stakeholders to promote better alignment and coordination of incentives towards increased health equity in managed care**

Leveraging Medicaid managed care contracts for health equity requires state-MCO partnerships

- Over 20 states will re-procure Medicaid MCO contracts over next two years
- MCOs do want Medicaid agencies to set the broad goals related to reducing health inequities
- MCOs have noted that having Medicaid MCO contractual expectations galvanizes MCOs resources to meet Medicaid member needs
- MCOs want to partner with Medicaid, as well as local cross-sector public/private organizations, to meet the huge need and challenge of reducing health inequities



Recommendation:

- **Foundations could support a Medicaid learning collaborative or discussion group to convene Medicaid leadership, MCOs and CBOs with the goal of leveraging Medicaid policies and rules, as well as community-level insights, to advance health equity and help shape MCO contractual expectations**

Aligning Incentives, Linkages Across RWJF Grantees and Promoting Key Findings

MCOs, CBOs, and RWJF grantees believe that incentives should be better aligned across organizations working with Medicaid members

MCOs note the critical necessity to bridge silos and increase cross-sector funding efforts and coordination to meet member needs

- e.g., across agencies: local housing, public health, and other social service
- Individuals may have multiple care managers across programs who are not coordinating
- MCOs can use their contracts with health care providers to encourage or require cross-sector collaboration
- State leadership is needed to engage the range of providers and organizations that must work across silos



Recommendation:

- **Convene cross-sector thought leaders from federal, state, MCO, health system/ provider, CBO, and member stakeholders to discuss opportunities for cross-sector partnership to reduce health equity, disparities, and structural racism**
- **Develop case studies of successful cross-sector collaboration**

Key findings across RWJF grantee projects could be coordinated and amplified

RWJF grantees working on similar problems but from different organizational approaches are often not aware of what other grantees are working on

- Grantee work could be more impactful with cross-organization coordination
- Grantees often have similar requests for Medicaid policy or regulatory information that could be more efficiently addressed via cross-grantee training



Recommendation:

- **RWJF could coordinate the dissemination of project activities and key findings across grantees and to the field**
- **RWJF could increase the number and frequency of peer-to-peer learning opportunities across grantees**

Future Research

Research Question Considerations for Potential Future Funding Efforts

MCOs and SDOH

- **What drives MCOs to fund SDOH** absent state RFP requirements and what mechanisms do MCOs use to fund SDOH?
- What are the possible impacts of funding SDOH on MCO rates?
- **How do MCOs fund housing,** both directly and indirectly?
- To what extent do housing investments result in ROI for MCOs?

MCOs and Health Equity

- **What drives MCOs to implement health equity-**related initiatives?
- What mechanisms do MCOs use to develop an organization culture of health equity?
- What are external levers for providers and health systems?

MCOs Now and Post-COVID

- **What have been the effects of COVID-related policy changes** (e.g., telehealth, loosening of provider networks, Medicaid continuous eligibility) on access and use of services?
- What changes will MCOs continue, how, and why?
- **How are MCOs assisting members in obtaining COVID-19 vaccines** in medical deserts and where mobility is an issue?
- What innovative strategies are MCOs undertaking? How do MCOs track members' vaccination rates?



MMCO Learning Hub: Published Content

<https://www.norc.org/Research/Projects/Pages/medicaid-managed-care-organization-learning-hub.aspx>

Note: Hyperlinks to specified resources on the MMCO Learning Hub's website are included on the following slides

COVID-19 Resources

- **Medicaid Managed Care Response to COVID-19**
- **Focus on COVID-19 Vaccinations: The Role of Medicaid MCOs**
- **Challenges in Access to Health Care and Trusted Sources of Information**
- **Concerns with Getting Sick and Paying for Health Care**

Note: Click on the resource title to be directed to the resource on the MMCO Learning Hub's website

MCO and CBO Small Group Discussion Findings

- **Social Determinants of Health**
- **Behavioral Health**
- **Member Engagement**

Note: Click on the resource title to be directed to the resource on the MMCO Learning Hub's website

Webinars

MCO Investments in Affordable Housing:

- Video Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hh-3yKCK-0w>
- [Presentation Slides](#)

Medicaid MCO Overview and Financing:

- Video Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NXIpUXPVoQ>
- [Presentation Slides](#) and [Q&A](#)

Medicaid MCO Authorities and Partnership Strategies:

- Video Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xH00VgCzT2c>
- [Presentation Slides](#) and [Q&A](#)

Note: Click on the resource title to be directed to the resource on the MMCO Learning Hub's website

Issue Briefs

- **COVID-19 Impact on Medicaid Enrollees' SDOH**
- **MCOs' Role in Combatting Homelessness in the Wake of COVID-19**
- **Food Insecurity**

Note: Click on the resource title to be directed to the resource on the MMCO Learning Hub's website

Spotlights: SDOH

- **CVS Health**
- **CareSource**
- **MCO SDOH Learning Collaborative**
- **Housing Insecurity: Circle the City**
- **Food insecurity: FOODRx**

Note: Click on the resource title to be directed to the resource on the MMCO Learning Hub's website

Spotlights, Cont'd

- **Behavioral Health**
 - [Cherokee Health Systems](#)
- **Member Engagement**
 - Banner Health and Arizona Health Care Cost Containment (AHCCCS) Office of Individual Family Affairs
 - Commonwealth Care Alliance (CCA) and Center to Advance Consumer Partnerships (CACP)

Note: Click on the resource title to be directed to the resource on the MMCO Learning Hub's website

Spotlights, Cont'd

- **MCO-CBO Partnerships in Housing**
 - [CareOregon and JOIN](#)
 - [UPMC Health Plan and Community Human Services \(CHS\)](#)
 - [Children's Community Health Plan \(CCHP\) and Milwaukee County Housing Division \(MCHD\)](#)
- **Health Equity MCO Efforts**
 - Health Services for Children with Special Needs, Inc. (HSCSN)
 - AmeriHealth Caritas
 - Gateway

Note: Click on the resource title to be directed to the resource on the MMCO Learning Hub's website

Thank you.

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