Health Centers at the Launch of Coverage Expansion: Thriving or Just Surviving?

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Background

1200 Federally Qualified Health Centers serve more than 21 million patients through 8,500 sites

Patients by Insurance, 2012

- Uninsured: 36.0%
- Medicaid/CHIP: 40.8%
- Medicare: 8.0%
- Other: 15.2%

Patients by Poverty Level, 2012

- 100% FPL and below: 71.9%
- 101-150% FPL: 14.2%
- 151-200% FPL: 6.5%
- Over 200% FPL: 7.4%

Source: Federally-funded health centers only. 2012 Uniform Data System, Bureau of Primary Health Care, HRSA, DHHS
Current Shortages and Predicted Workforce Concerns in 2014

Percent of centers reporting perceived workforce challenges in 2014:

- **Physician shortages**: 83% minor, 31% major
- **Nurse Practitioner and Physician Assistant shortages**: 73% minor, 38% major

Percent of centers reporting current shortages:

- **Primary Care Physicians**: 56%
- **Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants**: 36%

Source: The Commonwealth Fund 2013 Survey of Federally Qualified Health Centers
FQHCs Actively Preparing for New Patients

Percent of FQHCs implementing activities to prepare for Medicaid expansion and/or creation of new insurance exchanges in 2014:

- Hiring/training staff to help patients apply for health insurance coverage: 69%
- Expanding and/or integrating behavioral health: 53%
- Hiring new clinical staff, including physicians and nurse practitioners: 31%
- Hiring more medical assistants, community health workers to expand clinical care team: 27%
- Investing in telehealth or telemonitoring systems: 17%

Source: The Commonwealth Fund 2013 Survey of Federally Qualified Health Centers
Trends in Health Information Technology Capacity in FQHCs, 2009-2013

Percent of centers reporting:

- Has Electronic Medical Record System:
  - 2009: 40
  - 2013: 93

- Advanced HIT Functionality*:
  - 2009: 30
  - 2013: 85

*Advanced HIT Functionality is defined as meeting at least 9 of 13 functions reported in 2009 and 2013

Source: The Commonwealth Fund 2009 and 2013 Surveys of Federally Qualified Health Centers
Barriers to EHR Adoption, 2013

Percent of centers reporting the following barriers when using EHR systems:

- Adequacy of training for your staff: 36% major, 51% minor, total 87%
- Loss of productivity during the transition to an EHR system: 55% major, 31% minor, total 86%
- Annual cost of maintaining an EHR system: 44% major, 36% minor, total 80%
- Usefulness of templates for population management: 36% major, 44% minor, total 80%

Source: The Commonwealth Fund 2013 Survey of Federally Qualified Health Centers
More than Half of FQHC Patients Can Obtain An Appointment Same- or Next-Day

Percent of centers reporting:

- Patients can usually receive telephone advice after hours: 62%
- Patients can usually receive same- or next-day appointment: 51%
- Easy to obtain specialist procedures for Medicaid patients: 22%
- Easy to obtain specialist visits for Medicaid patients: 22%
- Easy to obtain specialist visits for uninsured patients: 7%
- Easy to obtain specialist procedures for uninsured patients: 4%

Source: The Commonwealth Fund 2013 Survey of Federally Qualified Health Centers
Conclusions/Implications

• All FQHCs to see an influx of patients
  • need to continue attracting PCPs and other clinical personnel, as well as expanding telehealth
  • Health Center Trust Fund set to expire in 2015 – need to ensure FQHCs’ stability as they prepare for new patients
• Integrating behavioral health care is critical — consider extending “health home” provision of ACA beyond 2 years
• HIT adoption is impressive, but there are still gaps, particularly with inter-operability and engaging patients
Questions/Issues for Discussion

• What impact are you projecting the coverage expansions to have on your patient load and patient mix? How are you preparing for the changes?

• How have recent federal investments (HITECH, ARRA, ACA) affected operations and ability to build capacity?

• What challenges do you foresee moving forward?

• What can federal officials do to make it easier for FQHCs to fulfill their mission and successfully meet patient needs?