

Success Stories

Building Collaborative Contracts with Health Care: Direction Home Akron Canton and Medical Mutual of Ohio

Since 2016, The John A. Hartford Foundation and USAging's Aging and Disability Business Institute (Business Institute) have honored exemplary models of effective contracting partnerships between community-based organizations (CBOs) and health care entities through [The John A. Hartford Foundation Business Innovation Award](#).¹

In 2022, the Business Institute presented Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities (DHAD), based in Uniontown, OH, with this award for its work supporting older adults and people with disabilities as they transition from hospital stays back to their homes. "DHAD exemplifies the innovative partnerships needed among community-based organizations, health systems and payers to provide critical services such as care transitions support, medication management, evidence-based health programs and social care interventions that improve health outcomes and equity. DHAD serves as a beacon for other Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and community-based organizations doing this important work across the country," said Terry Fulmer, PhD, RN, FAAN, President of The John A. Hartford Foundation.

This Success Story describes the innovative collaboration model DHAD helmed while serving as the Community Care Hub (formerly known as the Network Lead Entity) for Ohio's 12 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) in their work with Medical Mutual of Ohio. A Community Care Hub is a community-focused entity that organizes and supports a network of CBOs providing services to address health-related social needs. A key feature of Community Care Hubs is a centralized administrative and operational

infrastructure that includes contracting with health care organizations, payment operations, management of referrals, service delivery fidelity and compliance, technology, information security, data collection and reporting. Community Care Hubs promote an equitable health and social care ecosystem by serving as the bridge between CBOs, health care payers and providers, and public health systems, which increase a community's capacity to reach underserved populations.² DHAD serves as the Community Care Hub, contracting with Medical Mutual of Ohio and subcontracting with the other 11 AAAs in Ohio as part of DHAD's network.

This Success Story also shares insights into how the contract between DHAD and Medical Mutual of Ohio was successfully developed and sustained, providing a greater understanding of the challenges and successes of health care contracting. The collaborative partnership brought key organizations together to help individuals continue living in their homes. Through their efforts DHAD and Medical Mutual of Ohio were able to personalize care plans for individuals leveraging a home visit and, after the visit, connect them with providers, the Medical Mutual of Ohio team and other supportive resources.

About the Partners

Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities

Located in Uniontown, OH, DHAD provides older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers with long-term care choices and consumer

1 <https://www.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org/partnerships-in-action/the-john-a-hartford-foundation-business-innovation-award/>

2 <https://acl.gov/programs/strengthening-aging-and-disability-networks/improving-business-practices>

protection. DHAD is Ohio’s central access point and preferred long-term care management organization for all people with disabilities through its Aging and Disability Resource Center. DHAD’s four-county service area is 25 percent older adults older (age 60+), which is 10 percent of the state’s total population of adults age 60 and older.

Medical Mutual of Ohio

Medical Mutual of Ohio is based in Cleveland, OH, and has been a trusted health insurer for more than 85 years. Medical Mutual offers Medicare Advantage Plans as well as Medicare Supplemental Insurance plans. Medicare gave Medical Mutual’s Medicare Advantage plans, MedMutual Advantage® HMO and PPO plans a 5-star rating for 2023. (medmutual.com)

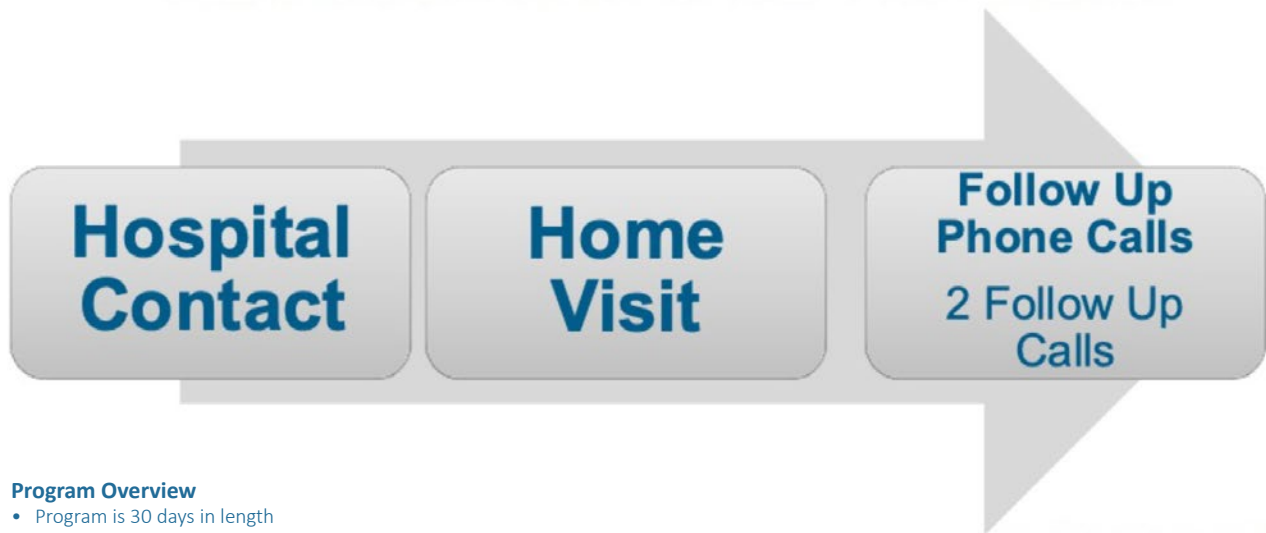
About the Contract

DHAD is well-established in providing acute care transitions for older adults and people with disabilities, building upon strong relationships with hospitals and health systems since 1999 with in-hospital

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assessments. Between 2010 and 2012, DHAD ran the Acute Care Transitions program with local hospitals. From 2012 to 2017, DHAD was one of the premier sites offering the Community Based Care Transitions Program (CCTP), funded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). DHAD used Dr. Eric Coleman’s Care Transitions Intervention evidence-based model as the foundation for this program. After the CCTP ended,

STRUCTURE OF THE TRANSITIONAL CARE PROGRAM



Program Overview

- Program is 30 days in length
- Model was modified in 2020 to provide Telephonic Introduction and Intervention to members per the contract
- Currently all interventions are conducted in the home setting unless the member is COVID+, in quarantine or immunocompromised
- Members are followed in the Skilled Nursing setting for 90 days for potential enrollment post-discharge



DHAD continued to seek partnerships with health plans and hospitals, which led to a 2018 contract with Medical Mutual of Ohio to provide the Medical Mutual of Ohio/DHAD Transitional Care Program to health plan members.

The Transitional Care Program improves medication adherence once a member is discharged from the hospital and ensures follow-up with their primary care provider (PCP). The program also improves health and collaboration across the health care continuum and empowers members to take control of managing their care, all of which combine to reduce avoidable readmissions to hospitals. The program prepares members and caregivers to participate in care across all medical delivery settings and with all care providers following discharge from the hospital.

The Transitional Care Program is active in all of Ohio's 88 counties and supports members during the transition from health care settings to their homes. The program identifies environmental and social determinants of health that need to be addressed and incorporates patient activation, providing members with confidence and knowledge they can use to manage their health and wellness.

Through its contract with Medical Mutual of Ohio, DHAD acts as the Community Care Hub for Ohio's statewide network of 12 Area Agencies on Aging, which serves Medical Mutual of Ohio's Medicare Advantage and commercial plan members. Upon discharge, members of all ages are eligible to receive the Transitional Care Program to ensure their successful return home.

The program provides several points of contact for members:

- during hospitalization,
- a post-discharge visit in their home with a Registered Nurse, and
- multiple post-visit contacts via telephone.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, DHAD and Medical Mutual of Ohio adjusted the contract to continue serving members upon discharge while also adhering to the developing restrictions. Once pandemic restrictions

were lifted, DHAD worked with Medical Mutual of Ohio for a quick return to in-person contact with each member. Face-to-face visits in the home provides the best care for members and enhances collaboration with the health plan and physician network. Currently, in-person interventions are performed in more than 90 percent of cases.

Once the member is engaged, the bulk of the program intervention occurs during the in-home visit from the nurse. This visit is typically completed within three to seven days of discharge and includes the following:

- thorough, detailed medication reconciliation with identification of discrepancies,
- disease-specific health education tailored to the member's diagnoses,
- community service navigation and identification of long-term service needs in the home setting,
- establishment of patient-centered health goals,
- confirmation of timely follow-up and collaboration with physicians,
- assessments, including the STEADI (Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths & Injuries) Falls Risk Assessment,
- collaboration with Medical Mutual of Ohio and the primary care physician, and
- identification of any caregiver support needs and referrals to community options.

During the 30 days following this visit, each member receives two phone contacts from a Health Coach and is asked to complete a survey to gauge satisfaction and program outcomes.

Impact/Outcomes

Through the Transitional Care Program, AAAs in Ohio served more than 3,100 Medical Mutual of Ohio members annually, positively influencing the post-hospitalization journey for these members. In the first nine months of 2022, 1,607 members were served, 90 percent in person. During that same time, the 30-day readmission rate for health plan members served was 8.2 percent, improving members' quality of life and helping reduce overall health care spending. Also, between January and September 2022, 1,558

CARE TRANSITIONS MODEL

PILLAR	RESULTS ³
Medication reconciliation	Improved adherence
Personal health record	Empowered patients
Disease-specific red flags	Reduced readmissions
Physician follow-up	Improved health
Linkage to long-term services and supports	Improved collaboration

medication reconciliations were completed on 97 percent of members served and 5 percent of those had significant discrepancies found and resolved by the Registered Nurse. Ninety-three percent of participants reported that they were satisfied with the program and the program’s results. Due to its success, DHAD’s contract and innovative partnership with Medical Mutual of Ohio has expanded beyond care transitions to incorporate multiple services, including in-home and telephonic visits.

The Transitional Care Program proves that 12 AAAs can operate a successful program and adhere to standard work as required by the contract. While all AAAs in this partnership operate under the same subcontract agreement, the scope of work allows flexibility so sites can structure staffing, member tracking and scheduling activities to meet their own organizational needs. These flexibilities are necessary between sites where volume may vary widely.

Medical Mutual recognized its work with DHAD and the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (o4a) as a key reason that it received a 5-star rating for its PPO plan in 2022 and its 5-star rating for the HMO and PPO plans in 2023. The 5-star rating is the highest rating bestowed upon Medicare Advantage plans by CMS. To celebrate its 5-star rating in 2022, Medical Mutual of Ohio awarded \$50,000 to o4a to establish innovation and additional business opportunities for the AAAs. The award supports a statewide conference highlighting best practices addressing three ongoing and critical topics facing AAAs:

- social isolation in older adults,
- caregiver stress and support, and
- direct care workforce shortages.⁴

A primary goal of the award is to enable Ohio’s 12 AAAs to provide older adults and people with disabilities additional supplemental services such as caregiver assessments and supports.

Partnership Building and Sustaining

What makes this partnership unique and innovative is the level of coordination and cooperation between Medical Mutual of Ohio and the AAAs. DHAD and Medical Mutual of Ohio meet weekly to review program key performance indicators and operations and, as partners, work together to shape program processes. Medical Mutual of Ohio includes DHAD and the AAAs as part of its membership services team, helping to coordinate with other vendors and providers with whom Medical Mutual of Ohio contracts. Incorporating DHAD and the AAAs as part of the membership services team helps ensure consistency and coordination of services to its members, including

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³ [DHAD.org](https://www.dhad.org)

⁴ https://www.usaging.org/Files/Workforce-Issues_508.pdf

SATISFACTION SURVEYS

All Lines of Business		
Survey Response	2022 YTD	Dec. 2022
Sent	2200	182
Return Rate (sample size)	472	33
Return Rate % (based on sample size)	21%	18%
Satisfaction Score % (S & VS)	93.6%	98%



home-delivered meals, home-based primary care and chronic disease education as well as other programs.

Additionally, DHAD’s Clinical Director participates in several Grand Rounds, providing insights and recommendations for the DHAD team on some of Medical Mutual of Ohio’s most complex member needs. Grand Rounds have regularly scheduled meetings in which hospital medical teams present and discuss inpatient medical cases that are usually complex and challenging. These Grand Rounds include Medical Mutual of Ohio, health systems across the state, DHAD and the local AAA. The AAA staff are considered a valuable extension of the health plan’s team. Medical Mutual of Ohio regularly recognizes the partnership with the AAAs as a key success factor for improving member care and outcomes. “The work between the AAAs and Medical Mutual of Ohio has been a true partnership between the clinical teams, quality and population health teams—everyone has been committed to problem-solving and enhancing services to our shared members and patients,” remarked Gary Cook, DHAD CEO.

Lessons Learned

DHAD improved performance by enrolling all participating AAAs into Clinisync, the state Health Information Exchange (HIE). Prior to this innovative development, AAAs spent considerable time and resources tracking Medical Mutual of Ohio members. The HIE provides updated information on members’ recent hospitalizations, contact information and follow-up care. Integration with HIE increased successful member contacts and enrollment into the service. This was critical during the pandemic.

From the beginning, establishing open lines of communication between the partners and having constant discussions have been key to the success of this partnership. Creating this open communication with the health plan is imperative, for example, when negotiating unanticipated pay rates related to rising costs, inflation and workforce shortages while the program is ongoing.

Much like most business operations, workforce shortages have impacted this program. The program partners devised ways for staff to cross-cover across

agencies statewide and offer services telephonically as needed. Having the freedom and flexibility to staff the program across the state and meet each AAA's needs was vital to the program's continuity.

The Future

The program's contract has been renewed for three years to expand the kinds of services offered and the populations served. DHAD continues to improve patient experience, empower self-management, improve medication adherence, reduce medication errors, decrease the cost of unnecessary admissions, and improve the collaboration among acute care, CBOs and health plans to ensure successful health outcomes.

DHAD and the Transitional Care Program's partners, including all Ohio AAAs and Medical Mutual of Ohio, have entered into conversations to sustain and grow the program, such as adding caregiver support programs and services that address supplemental home services discovered in social determinants of health assessments. DHAD continues investigating services that can grow additional benefits and target the health plan's HEDIS (Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set) metrics. They continue to strengthen the program's sustainability and find ways to expand to all of Medical Mutual of Ohio's commercial benefit members and include other commercial lines. Ultimately, DHAD hopes to contract with other health plans to offer its Transitional Care Program and other developing DHAD services and programs.

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This publication was by USAging's Aging and Disability Business Institute. Led by USAging in partnership with the most experienced and respected organizations in the Aging and Disability Networks, the mission of the Aging and Disability Business Institute is to build and strengthen partnerships between aging and disability community-based organizations and the health care system. Funded by The John A. Hartford Foundation, The SCAN Foundation and the Administration for Community Living, the Aging and Disability Business Institute provides community-based organizations with the tools and resources to successfully adapt to a changing health care environment, enhance their organizational capacity and capitalize on emerging opportunities to diversify funding. Learn more at www.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org.