

Feature Article

Community Care Network of Virginia, Inc.– Enrico,VA

The Community Care Network of Virginia started as an entity to help FQHCs in the commonwealth of Virginia be able to negotiate managed care contracts well. From there they moved into credentialing services as way to leverage federal resources. Rather than each organization having someone handle contracts, members had the foresight to develop their own for-profit company, capitalizing on any savings instead each member hiring someone to do billing. Members jointly own the company and share the profits. FQHCs have primary care as a requirement of nonprofits so this way the shareholders get benefit of both the for-profit and non-profit world with greater flexibility.

Most important benefit members receive?

This network is comprised of all (26) FQHCs in the commonwealth, representing 120 sites. The current Chief Executive Officer, Rene Cabral-Daniels lists the following as the most significant benefits network members receive.

1. The ability to participate in and fairly negotiate with managed care plans. Their collective size allows them to participate in incentive based programs that none of them could do individually.
2. The network has positioned themselves for value based payment. They are already negotiating some contracts and participating in large health plans in some programs that mirrors what the federal government is trying to do.
3. Receiving discounts for credentialing providers and for having billing done by staff who understand FQHC billing.
4. Significant bargaining power with Information Technology (IT) vendors. The network assisted members in selecting their Electronic Health Record (EHR) system, resulting in 24 of the 26 members being on the same system. Additionally, the network hosts their server and provides training and updates when new requirements are published by CMS or HRSA.

How does this network tackle financial sustainability? One big factor is in having clients that are not shareholders. The network has clients in 23 different states, enabling them to offer discounts while providing quality service in the market place. This intentionality, along with the bargaining power of being able to state “we have all the FQHCs of the Virginia Commonwealth that are all satisfied with our service” provides solid foundation.

The network’s goal for the coming year is to dive deeper into value based payment. Having a new module for extracting quality data from EHR positions them to excel under greater value based payment efforts.

Ms. Cabral-Daniels was asked "What would be the impact if your network ended tomorrow"? She stated the ability of the shareholders to quickly avail themselves of opportunities within the marketplace, as well as protect themselves from downsizing would be eroded. Additionally, because they provide for the medically underserved, that population would be significantly impacted in negative ways.

We all know leading a health network is an extremely challenging endeavor. A current difficulty for this network is trying to find the time to avail themselves of all the opportunities that are presented. They have a number of things in the works presently and are challenged by those related growing pains. They recognize the need to be cautious so as not to lose the quality they've worked so hard to establish, thus tackling growth in a strategic, thoughtful manner.

When asked what assists her in handling the difficulties of her position, Ms. Cabral-Daniels responded, "The passion that my staff have, especially the executive committee". Being able to observe that everyone really wants to see all of the network members succeed helps when facing obstacles. Additionally, "NCHN has been an incredible value to me", states Ms. Cabral-Daniels. She elaborates, "I learn from peers, from Rebecca and from the consultants". "The greatest asset to me is therapeutic". She explains NCHN resources, including its members' willingness to share their mistakes and their expertise, makes NCHN a resource rich support.

So, what advice would this network leader offer to others? "Get ready for a bumpy but enjoyable ride". There are many difficulties and challenges along the way but what is great is "...to do something to move the network forward. To look back on the wake and see the smooth wake and know the network is responsible for that".

The Community Care Network of Virginia has been a member of NCHN since 2014. Ms. Cabral-Daniels currently serves on NCHN's board of directors.

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