Fact Sheet
Healthy Opportunities Pilot Region Awards

On May 27, 2021, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) announced the selection of organizations to serve three regions of the state, marking a major milestone towards launching the nation’s first comprehensive program to test evidence-based, non-medical interventions designed to reduce costs and improve the health of Medicaid beneficiaries.

Following a competitive selection process, the following organizations will reach three regions, two in eastern North Carolina and one in western North Carolina.

- **Access East, Inc.**:
  - Beaufort, Bertie, Chowan, Edgecombe, Halifax, Hertford, Martin, Northampton, Pitt
- **Community Care of the Lower Cape Fear**:
  - Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender
- **Dogwood Health Trust**:
  - Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Yancey

North Carolina’s Approach to Buying Health

NCDHHS is committed to improving the health and well-being of North Carolinians with an innovative, well-coordinated system of care that addresses both the medical and non-medical drivers of health. While high-quality medical care is crucial, up to 80% of a person’s health is determined by social and environmental factors. To create a system that improves health and promotes value, North Carolina must look beyond services that are provided within the four walls of a hospital or clinic.

One important way NCDHHS is operationalizing its commitment to buying health is through the Healthy Opportunities Pilots, a groundbreaking program that will work in conjunction with the state’s transition to NC Medicaid Managed Care to test and evaluate the use of Medicaid to pay for evidence-based interventions designed to address non-medical factors that drive health outcomes and costs.
• Leverage evaluation findings to embed cost-effective interventions that improve health outcomes into the Medicaid program statewide, furthering NCDHHS’ goals for a sustainable Medicaid program.
• Support the sustainability of delivering non-medical services identified as effective through the evaluation, including by strengthening capabilities of HSOs and partnerships with health care payers and providers.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To maximize the impact of limited Pilot funding, Pilot services will be provided to eligible NC Medicaid Managed Care members expected to benefit most from them, as determined by PHPs and in accordance with NCDHHS standards and guidelines. To be eligible for and receive Pilot services, NC Medicaid Managed Care members must live in a Pilot region and have at least one qualifying physical or behavioral health condition and one qualifying social risk factor.

PILOT SERVICES

The Healthy Opportunities Pilots will cover the cost of delivering a select set of interventions that address housing, food, transportation, interpersonal violence and toxic stress. Each Network Lead must contract with HSOs to cover all domains of services (housing, food, transportation, interpersonal safety and toxic stress) for all types of enrolled members (pregnant women, children and adults) in their region.

HEALTHY OPPORTUNITIES NETWORK LEADS

Healthy Opportunities Network Leads will play a critical role in the Pilots by connecting the health care and social service sectors. Network Lead responsibilities include:
• Establishing, managing and overseeing a network of HSOs, including assessing HSO performance.
• Ensuring an adequate network of HSOs to meet Medicaid members’ needs through the Pilots and ensuring the delivery high-quality Pilot services.
• Distributing capacity-building funding to HSOs.
• Assisting HSOs with invoicing for Pilot services and routing invoices to a member’s PHP for payment.
• Providing technical assistance and conducting quality improvement activities with its HSO network.
• Facilitating learning collaboratives for Pilot HSOs, PHPs and care management entities.
• Collecting and submitting data to support DHHS’ evaluation and oversight of the Pilot program.

PREPAID HEALTH PLANS & CARE MANAGEMENT ENTITIES

PHPs will play a central role in implementing the Healthy Opportunities Pilots and are ultimately responsible for managing Pilot participants’ physical, behavioral and social needs. PHPs’ key Pilot responsibilities, some of which will be shared with their delegated care management entities, include:
• Managing a capped allocation of funding to spend on Pilot services outside of its capitation rate, in accordance with Department guidelines.
• Making Pilot enrollment determinations for their members that meet certain eligibility criteria and authorizing pilot services.
• Ensuring Pilot participants are enrolled in other available federal, state and local programs to maximize the value of Pilot expenditures.
• Making referrals to HSOs for authorized Pilot services and following up with Pilot participants to evaluate ongoing needs.
• Collecting and submitting data to support DHHS’ evaluation and oversight of the Pilot program.
• Paying HSOs for Pilot services provided.

HUMAN SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS

HSOs will deliver authorized Pilot services to Medicaid managed care members who are Pilot participants. HSO key Pilot responsibilities include:
• Delivering high-quality Pilot services to Pilot enrollees.
• Tracking services delivered to Pilot participants and conducting closed-loop referrals in NCCARE360.
• Submitting invoices to the Network Lead reflecting Pilot services they have delivered to Pilot participants.
• Participating in readiness and quality improvement activities, including training, technical assistance and convenings organized by a Network Lead or NCDHHS.
• Supporting NCDHHS oversight and evaluation of Pilots.

For more information about Healthy Opportunities, visit: https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/department-initiatives/healthy-opportunities

LOOKING AHEAD

Network Leads will spend the upcoming months building their network of HSOs and developing their capacity and that of their HSOs to participate in the Pilots. NCDHHS anticipates that Pilot service delivery will begin in the Spring of 2022.