

PTAC Issue Brief Introduction: Transitioning to Value-Based Care and Alternative Payment Models

INTRODUCTION

The Physician-Focused Payment Model Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) was established by the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) to: 1) review proposed physician-focused payment models (PFPMs) submitted by individuals and stakeholder entities; 2) prepare comments and recommendations regarding whether such models meet criteria established by the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS); and 3) submit these comments and recommendations to the Secretary. PTAC reviews submitted proposals using criteria established by the Secretary in regulations at 42 CFR §414.1465. As of 2025, PTAC has reviewed 35 proposals.

Within this context, it is beneficial for PTAC to reflect on PFPM proposals that have been submitted to the Committee to provide further advisement on pertinent issues regarding effective payment model innovation in Alternative Payment Models (APMs) and PFPMs. Accordingly, the Committee began a series of theme-based discussions on this topic in September 2020. Through PTAC's research and advice provided by stakeholders, these public meetings provide valuable and detailed information and advice to the Secretary on important payment model issues.

Several PFPM proposals submitted to PTAC have focused on providers having full accountability for the quality and costs of a specific patient population—now referred to as population-based total cost of care (PB-TCOC) models. PTAC has seen value in reviewing elements within these proposals, along with current information on PB-TCOC models and value-based care transformation.

Since March 2022, PTAC's public meetings have been devoted to themes directly relevant to PB-TCOC models and maximizing participation in PB-TCOC models. The theme-based discussions have addressed PB-TCOC-related topics such as model definition and vision, payment issues, integration of primary and specialty care, transitions in care, and issues for rural areas. The PTAC Issue Brief series introduces and summarizes several of the topics covered in PTAC's theme-based discussions. A complete list of the public meetings, including meeting recordings and supporting documents, can be accessed on the [ASPE PTAC website](#).

GOALS FOR THE PTAC ISSUE BRIEF SERIES

Each theme-based discussion requires a substantial amount of advance preparation, deliberation, and research. A Preliminary Comments Development Team (PCDT) directs the meeting topic, selects subject matter experts (SMEs) to present at the meeting, and reviews an environmental scan specific to the theme-based discussion topic. Based on findings from the environmental scan of existing literature and

its deliberations, the PCDT develops a presentation which sets the stage for the theme-based discussion. The majority of stakeholders and experts who present at the public meeting also prepare formal presentations. Occasionally, the PCDT or the full Committee will request original research related to the theme-based discussion topic. In such cases, these research results are also made public on the ASPE PTAC website. After the meeting, the Committee produces a report to the Secretary to summarize the meeting information and share comments and recommendations that arise from the Committee’s public deliberations.¹

The theme-based discussion process produces a large volume of cutting-edge information and evidence relevant to PB-TCOC models and value-based care. The PTAC Issue Brief series aims to make this information more accessible to members of the public who are interested in specific topics relevant to delivery system transformation, APMs, and PB-TCOC models. Each Issue Brief will summarize key information about a specific topic from the public meeting sources described above. The PTAC Issue Brief series will cover topics such as:

- Definition and Vision for PB-TCOC Models
- Overview of Payment in PB-TCOC Models
- Integrating Primary and Specialty Care in PB-TCOC Models: Care Delivery and Payment Model Considerations
- PB-TCOC Models in Rural Areas
- Maximizing Participation in PB-TCOC Models
- High-Touch Primary Care in PB-TCOC Models
- Care Coordination in PB-TCOC Models
- Transitions of Care in PB-TCOC Models: Clinical and Payment Considerations
- Performance Measurement Issues in PB-TCOC Models
- Framework for Performance Indicators
- Additional Key Issues: Risk Adjustment, Attribution, and Benefits

¹ All PTAC reports to the Secretary can be found on the [ASPE PTAC website](#).

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