



Media Release

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For Immediate Release

April 2, 2013

Grant aimed at improving care for Arkansas Medicaid patients

The Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Medical Services has received a \$2 million grant aimed at improving health care outcomes for Medicaid patients receiving care through multi-clinic health systems.

Arkansas was one of 27 states the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services chose to receive the grant. Funding runs through December 2014 and will allow Arkansas Medicaid to implement quality improvement measures that can support primary care health systems in providing better care.

“This is a great opportunity to improve the DHS infrastructure and support the goal of patients receiving quality primary care and improve health care of our communities” said Medicaid Director Dr. William Golden.

The grant also has the potential for improving health care for Arkansans who are not part of the federal health care program because changes in Medicaid care often translate to changes across the private health care system, said Golden, who wrote the grant.

Although not part of state’s Health Care Payment Improvement Initiative, the focus of the grant does correspond with the goal of that effort: rewarding high-quality, cost effective care. The new grant will focus on working with networks of primary care practices such as the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, the Baptist Health System and qualified health clinics. A team will implement national measures of quality for preventive care, such as improving use of mammography, diabetes prevention and care, cervical cancer screenings and pediatric well child visits. The team will then develop digital “dashboards” for participating practices that allow for comparison of how well the quality measures are being met across the systems and at specific practice sites.

For example, DHS will give a health system its rates for mammography of patients, how that rate compares to state and national performance, and the success rate of their system’s clinical sites in providing this preventive service.

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Beyond providing better care and more positive outcomes for patients, improving quality measures has the potential to save money too.

“Greater use of preventive care will mean that Arkansans seek care earlier and that can help reduce health care system costs,” said Golden.