

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Unites with Major Health Care Players to Accelerate Transformation of U.S. Health Care System

Leaders Forming New Health Care Transformation Task Force Commit to Putting 75 percent of Their Businesses in Value-based Arrangements by 2020

BOSTON, MA — January 29, 2015 — [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts](#), along with several of the nation's largest health care systems and payers, joined by purchaser and patient stakeholders, today announced a powerful new private-sector alliance dedicated to accelerating the transformation of the U.S. health care system to value-based business and clinical models aligned with improving outcomes and lowering costs.

The [Health Care Transformation Task Force](#), whose members include six of the nation's top 15 health systems and four of the top 25 health insurers, challenged other providers and payers to join its commitment to put 75 percent of their business into value-based arrangements that focus on the triple aim of better health, better care and lower costs by 2020. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts joined the Task Force because of its experience with its Alternative Quality Contract (AQC) one of the largest private payment reform initiatives in the United States.

"Massachusetts, in many ways, is a preview to the realized goal of the Task Force — what broad adoption of payment reform in a market can do," said Dana Safran, ScD, Senior Vice President for Performance and Improvement at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "This Task Force's goal is audacious, but we've already made significant steps towards achieving this goal. At Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, our HMO population, which represents about half of our commercial business, is at 85 percent participation. We're working on applying a similar global budget model for our PPO population, and we are confident of achieving the task force goal of 75 percent by 2020."

The Task Force's announcement comes just two days after Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell announced that Medicare would shift 50 percent of its provider payments into alternative payment arrangements such as accountable care organizations or bundled payments by 2018. Together, the two announcements send a clear signal that the public and private sector are aligning around a new trajectory for health care payments that moves away from fee-for-service and into alternative payment models.

The Task Force will seek to align private and public sector changes in the way providers are paid. The Task Force will:

- Develop timely and actionable policy and program design recommendations for the private sector, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Congress and others; new delivery and payment models.
- Best-practice tools, benchmarks and approaches to implement them.

Initial priorities include improving the Accountable Care Organization (ACO) model, developing common bundled payment framework and improving care for high-cost patients. To learn more about Health Care Transformation Task Force and stay up to date on its latest recommendations and reports, visit www.hcttf.org.

About the AQC

Introduced in 2008, the AQC now includes 90 percent of the physicians and hospitals in the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts HMO network. It is an innovative way to pay for care that focuses on promoting quality and rewards positive health outcomes. It is a crucial component of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts' agenda to make quality health care affordable for its members and employer customers and is the predominant contract model between Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and its network physicians and hospitals. The alternative payment model fosters shared responsibility for both improving care and moderating the unsustainable rate of increase in health care costs. An October 2014 study in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) shows that AQC has improved the quality of patient care and lowered costs in the four years since it was first implemented. The four-year study by Harvard Medical School researchers offers important lessons for payment reform efforts nationally. Read more [about the AQC](#).

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (www.bluecrossma.com) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We are the trusted health plan for more than 31,500 Massachusetts employers and are committed to working with others in a spirit of shared responsibility to make quality health care affordable. Consistent with our corporate promise to always put our 2.8 million members first, we are rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About Health Care Transformation Task Force

Health Care Transformation Task Force (<http://www.hcttf.org>) is a unique collaboration of patients, payers, providers and purchasers working to lead a sweeping transformation of the health care system. By transitioning to value-based models that support the Triple Aim of better health, better care and lower costs, the organization is committed to accelerating the transformation to value in health care.

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