

ACO CHECKLIST   
Ensure your network has a comprehensive approach to care for individuals living with serious illness

PURPOSE

Employer-purchasers (“Purchasers”) can benefit in certain circumstances from meeting directly with an Accountable Care Organization (ACO) to learn more about how the ACO cares for the subset of patients – and their family members – who are facing the symptoms and stresses of serious illness. Purchasers with direct contracting arrangements with an ACO can use this checklist during regularly scheduled meetings or check-ins with the ACO to get answers to important questions. This is an opportunity for all Purchasers to ensure that the ACO is providing sufficient attention and resources to the population of patients living with a serious illness.

These questions are organized into categories that illustrate a comprehensive approach to appropriate care for people with serious illness.

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| **Category** | **Questions** | **ACO Provider Response** |
| I. HOW DOES THE ACO PROACTIVELY IDENTIFY SERIOULY ILL INDIVIDUALS WITH PALLIATIVE CARE NEEDS? | What process, if any, is used to identify individuals who are struggling with serious illness and may be in need of palliative care interventions (such as goals-of-care conversations, advance care planning, pain and symptom assessment/management, and in-home services)? |  |
| Does the ACO use functional status information, such as difficulty in bathing or dressing, to identify seriously ill individuals? |  |
| What process, if any, is used to outreach to individuals with a serious illness about potential benefits from palliative care services? |  |
| II. WHAT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE LIVING WITH SERIOUS ILLNESS? | Does the ACO network include board-certified palliative care professionals? In what setting(s) are they available (e.g., hospitals, oncology practices, cardiology practices)? |  |
| Does the ACO utilize hospitals that have The Joint Commission (TJC) advanced certification in palliative care? |  |
| What programs and services do you provide to assist family caregivers of individuals with serious illness, including parents of children with serious illness? |  |
| Does the ACO make home-based interdisciplinary palliative care services available? |  |
| How does the ACO provide access to meaningful and appropriate 24/7 response for pain and other symptom crises? |  |
| III. WHAT CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE, AND WHAT ARE CASE MANAGERS’ COMPETENCIES? | Describe the ACO’s case management services (both clinical and non-clinical) for adult and pediatric individuals with serious illness. |  |
| Does the ACO’s case management include symptom assessment and psychosocial assessment, with follow-up? |  |
| What training and support is provided to ACO case managers to help improve their advance care planning and goals-of-care conversation skills and symptom assessment and management competencies? |  |
| Are the ACO case managers specifically responsible for clarifying goals of care and advance care planning with seriously ill individuals? |  |
| Does the ACO’s case management program assess family caregiver burden or needs? |  |
| How do the ACO case managers share goals, advance care plans, and assessed needs with the treating clinicians? |  |
| IV. WHAT PALLIATIVE CARE SKILL TRAINING IS AVAILABLE TO NETWORK PROVIDERS? | How does the ACO support the ongoing professional development of its network providers in working with seriously ill individuals and their families? Does it support any specific training in advance care planning and goals-of-care conversation skills and symptom assessment and management? |  |
| V. DOES THE ACO MEASURE, TRACK, AND REPORT APPROPRIATE QUALITY MEASURES FOR THE SERIOUSLY ILL POPULATION? | How does the ACO measure the quality of care provided to individuals with serious illness? Does the ACO quality program include at least one measure unique to the seriously ill population? Please provide results from specific metrics. |  |
| How does the ACO measure patient satisfaction with physician communications? What efforts, if any, are made to measure care experience for the seriously ill population? |  |
| How does the ACO report on quality of care or patient satisfaction with provider communications to the Purchaser? |  |