

Blue Cross NC and Aledade to Offer Data-Driven Support for Independent Primary Care Practices to Help Form Accountable Care Organizations in North Carolina

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (Blue Cross NC) is collaborating with Aledade Inc., to offer independent primary care practices access to data-driven support to enable them to form accountable care organizations (ACOs) and participate in value-based reimbursement programs with Blue Cross NC.

This collaboration will allow contracted independent primary care practices to participate in value-based programs typically associated with larger, hospital-affiliated physician groups. Providers participating in Aledade ACO arrangements will gain access to data-driven support to help them implement technology and population health management tools necessary for delivering the high-quality, coordinated care that's available in an ACO environment. With Aledade's assistance, providers can gain a more comprehensive view of their patients' total health care data and experiences throughout the entire health care system:

- Aledade provides primary care physicians (participating in Aledade-based ACOs) with user-friendly technology and data analytics to offer visibility into their patients' health care accessed outside of their offices.
- Aledade offers regulatory expertise utilizing best practices from a national network of hundreds of primary care providers, as well as face-to-face support for each practice's ACO alignment.

Only independent primary care providers will be eligible to enter into an ACO arrangement with Aledade. The initial launch will be primary care specialties focused on adult care such as Internal Medicine, Family medicine, and General Practice.

Eligibility to enter into an ACO agreement with Aledade and receive the resources available through the Blue Cross NC and Aledade collaboration will be limited to independent providers and groups contracted and in good standing with Blue Cross NC. Providers and groups employed by hospitals and health systems are ineligible.

Aledade is a registered trademark of Aledade, Inc. and information about their company and services is available at www.aledade.com.

FAQs

Who is Aledade?

Founded in 2014, Aledade partners with independent practices, health centers, and clinics to build and lead Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) anchored in primary care. Through these ACOs, Aledade empowers physicians to stay independent, practice medicine like they've always wanted to, and thrive financially by keeping people healthy. Aledade offers a comprehensive range of capabilities that include cutting-edge data analytics, user-friendly guided workflows, unparalleled regulatory expertise, strong payer relationships, and local, hands-on support from attentive experts. In true alignment with its partners, Aledade shares in the risk and reward across all of its 30 value-based governmental and commercial contracts covering more than 300,000 lives in 18 states.

What is an Aledade ACO?

An Aledade ACO is community of practices, health centers and/or clinics who collaborate to reduce the total cost of care for defined patient populations and to manage care quality. ACOs are the leading form of value-based care in the U.S. and enable participants to share in the savings they generate for the healthcare system. Practices participating in ACOs focus on care coordination, population health management, and preventive care needs of their patients in order to improve outcomes and drive affordability. Aledade ACOs participate in agreements that increase data sharing, facilitate care coordination, and split the value of savings across stakeholders.

What is the benefit of joining an Aledade ACO?

Aledade offers an opportunity for solo practitioners and independent primary care practices (groups) to participate in value-based reimbursement programs, which may help them to earn additional revenue and sustain their independence. Aledade absorbs the cost of creating and managing the ACO, providing participants with user-friendly technology and data analytics tools that help physicians and staff effectively monitor and manage patient care within their practice and with other providers in their community. Aledade experts provide technical, clinical and practice transformation support on an ongoing basis, utilizing best practices from a national network of thousands of providers, as well as (and available when a provider agrees) face-to-face practice support for ACO alignment. Aledade also offers deep regulatory expertise in preparing for and navigating changing requirements.

Who is eligible to join an Aledade ACO?

Only independent primary care providers will be eligible to enter into an ACO arrangement with Aledade. The initial primary care specialties will focus on Internal Medicine, Family Medicine and General Practice. However, Med-Peds practices may be considered for the program. Providers and groups employed by hospitals and health systems are ineligible.

Can a Pediatric or OBGYN practice join Aledade?

Currently the arrangement between Aledade and Blue Cross NC is in development. The initial phase of the Blue Cross NC Aledade ACO development will focus on adult primary care providers such as IM, FM, and General Practice. Med-Peds practices may be considered for the program. We anticipate expansion into other primary care specialties over time.

How does an independent Internal Medicine or family practice sign up to participate with Aledade ACO?

Please email Blue Cross NC Advanced Primary Care Team at Provider.APC@bcbsnc.com

What initial criteria must be met for eligibility to participate with an Aledade ACO?

Must be:

- An independent primary care practice provider
- Have an electronic health record system which is Meaningful Use (MU) certified
- Not subject to investigation or sanctions by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services or Department of Justice for program integrity matters
- Be credentialed and participating in good standing with Blue Cross NC for its commercial products (and Medicare Advantage products if participating both Medicare and commercial)
- Participate with Blue Cross NC under a specialty of internal medicine, family medicine or general practice, and only for adult care

(Aledade also requires a participation agreement, which is separate and independent from provider's agreements with Blue Cross NC.)

Will providers still contract with Blue Cross NC if deciding to participate with an Aledade ACO?

Yes, providers must be contracted with Blue Cross NC for eligibility to participate with an Aledade ACO (for inclusion to benefit from the Aledade and Blue Cross NC arrangement).

How do providers qualify for a fee increase if joining an Aledade ACO?

Providers will receive an enhanced fee schedule when they agree to participate in the Blue Cross NC ACO agreement as a member of an Aledade ACO. After a provider or practice fully completes the Aledade participation process, Blue Cross NC will be notified by Aledade. Blue Cross NC will then extend an enhanced fee schedule to the provider or practice.

What services qualify for fee increases?

Fee increases will primarily be based on evaluation and management (E/M) and preventive services codes, performed in the office. A contract amendment with the specific fee increases will be offered to providers who are interested in and eligible for an Aledade ACO with Blue Cross NC.

How much is the fee increase?

This will be discussed directly with each provider (or group) to maintain confidentiality as outlined in the non-disclosure portion of our contract agreements.

When will fee increases begin after a provider or group signs an agreement with an Aledade ACO?

This will be determined based on when a provider's or group's specific agreement is signed.

Can a practice in an Aledade ACO participate in another BCNC ACO?

No, providers who choose to participate in an Aledade ACO will not be eligible for participation in other Blue Cross NC ACO arrangements.

Does participation in a Blue Cross NC ACO preclude participation in any non-Blue Cross NC ACO?

No, providers may still enter ACO or network relationships with other payers.

Will current [Blue Quality Physician Program \(BQPP\)](#) providers be eligible to join an Aledade ACO?

Yes, providers currently in the BQPP program may join an Aledade ACO and at that time, will be transitioned from the BQPP program to the Aledade ACO.

If joining Aledade, which attributed Blue Cross NC patients will be eligible for inclusion under the ACO design (i.e. advanced data sharing and increased fees for select services)?

ACO designs with Aledade will be inclusive for all commercially insured members and includes all under age 65 members enrolled in commercially insured products, self-insured Administrative Services Only products and IPP HOST members. Additionally, ACO designs with Aledade will be offered for our Medicare Advantage products. ACO designs with Aledade will not (at this time) include Blue Cross NC's products offered for members of the NC State and Teachers Health Plan.

Is there a minimum number of attributed Blue Cross NC patients a practice must maintain in order to participate with Aledade?

No, there is no predetermined number of attributed Blue Cross NC members required for an individual practice.