

Delta Center Announces Second Phase With Opportunity for 8 Additional States to Participate

The Delta Center for a Thriving Safety Net recently announced 3 additional years of support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to continue the initiative.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Delta Center for a Thriving Safety Net](#) (Delta Center) recently announced three additional years of support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to continue the initiative. The Delta Center employs a novel approach to advancing policy and practice change by focusing on state and national associations representing thousands

of safety-net providers across the nation. Led by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI) with the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) and the National Council for [Behavioral Health](#) (National Council) as strategic partners, the project brings together state primary care associations (PCAs) and behavioral health state associations (BHSAs) to build



JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.

“

I'm thrilled for the opportunity to have 3 more years to advance the work of the Delta Center. Now more than ever, we need our efforts to be focused on the needs of real people facing real crises.”

*Katie Coleman, MSPH,
Director of the MacColl Center*

relationships and take collective action to advance policy, payment, and practice changes that will benefit millions of people served by health centers and community behavioral health organizations. The ultimate goal of this work is to cultivate health policy and a care system that is more equitable and better meets the needs of individuals and families. In the first three years of the project, the Delta Center awarded grants to 12 state teams to advance policy and care change in their states. Teams participated in six convenings, virtual learning opportunities, and a site visit as well as receiving monthly coaching.

Through these activities, the Delta Center has

strengthened national partnership and thought leadership on value-based payment and care

(VBP/C); fostered alignment in behavioral health and primary care VBP/C strategy in 12 states; increased capacity of associations to support their providers in VBP/C; and catalyzed major state policy actions to improve access and care.

“We are proud to enter this ambitious new phase in the Delta Center’s important work guiding behavioral health organizations through the evolving payment environment. Over the past three years, our work with the Delta Center has helped our state organizations – leaders in their communities – build capacity and infrastructure to advance value-based payment. Today, with COVID-19 laying bare additional gaps in our country’s safety net, the continuation of this collaborative is more critical than ever. We thank the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for their support and look forward to working with our Delta Center partners to give our providers the best tools possible to support

Rachel Tobey, Co-Director of the Delta Center noted that “Delta Center grantees have demonstrated the power of partnership with their actions. Grantees have elevated the benefits of telehealth for primary care and behavioral health in Medicaid in New York, made critical strides toward behavioral health payment parity in New Mexico, and created a joint training center and co-located offices to facilitate ongoing collaboration in Missouri. These are just a few examples of how primary care associations and behavioral health state associations are ensuring that the policy and care systems in their states are best positioned to improve care and ultimately health for patients and consumers. The recent pandemic has only emphasized how important it is to have a strong primary care and behavioral health safety net in this country.”

Since launching the Delta Center in 2018, the imperative for PCAs and BHSAs to collaborate in achieving greater financial flexibility and stability for the safety net has only increased. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically increased the number of people who rely on Medicaid, at the same time as safety-net provider organizations contend with service cuts or even closure. In response, states and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have enacted rapid policy reforms to facilitate care during the pandemic. Providers and the individuals and families they serve will need continued support through this crisis and beyond.

One grantee noted, “Without this grant, I don’t think that conversation would be as likely—the dialogue and communication between us is far better than it’s ever been. I feel comfortable to ask them [counterpart association] anything. In thinking about the future, and future crises like this, it opens my mind to what’s possible with community partners that we often didn’t think about.”

JSI is excited to launch the second phase in partnership with the MacColl Center for Health Care Innovation at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute (MacColl Center), the National Association for Community Health Centers (NACHC), and the National Council for Behavioral Health (National Council). Families USA will also be joining as a partner to advise the Delta Center on how best to elevate meeting individual and family needs as a guiding principle for all project activities. The second phase will fund eight states from the original cohort of

grantees to build on their collaborative work and will expand the initiative's reach to eight additional states, increasing the Delta Center's impact in advancing payment, policy, and practice change that ultimately improves lives.

"We are excited for this next phase of the Delta Center's work, especially the efforts of state associations to focus more closely on what patients say they most want and need from their health care," said Andrea Ducas, senior program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "This type of work is necessary to bring about practice change that is meaningful for patients and their families."

The Delta Center will release a Call for Proposals for new states to join the collaborative in late October. The Delta Center will also be holding an informational webinar for teams made up of PCAs and BHSAs and proposals will be due in mid-January 2021.

Read more about the initiative and partners.

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