

Primer

Building Bridges to Value: Infrastructure Essentials for Community Health Centers

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Overview

The health care sector is increasingly shifting from fee-for-service payments to value-based payment (VBP) models to reduce costs and achieve better outcomes. Community health centers (CHCs), with their focus on prevention and management, can play a central role in this transformation. But thriving in VBP models requires more than contract changes, it also demands targeted investments and new competencies. The report **Building Bridges to Value: Infrastructure Essentials for Community Health Centers** offers a practical framework to help CHCs identify and prioritize the infrastructure (services and supports) needed for success under VBP arrangements.

About the Framework

Developed through expert interviews and a literature review, the framework reflects perspectives from CHCs, policy experts, primary care associations, health center networks, and private sector partners. The framework identifies net new infrastructure for VBP, distinct from the infrastructure required for CHC operations, arrayed across VBP types. Infrastructure concepts are organized into domains to help readers easily situate their current capacities and assess future needs. The four domains, as well as their related services and supports, are:

1. Leadership, Governance & Legal

- Provide champions at the board and executive level
- Conduct legal and policy review to assess VBP eligibility and risk
- Create governance bodies specific to VBP oversight
- Evaluate entity structure for risk-bearing participation

2. Operations

- Designate staff for payer negotiations, vendor management, and internal education
- Create capabilities to coordinate provider networks and manage delegated responsibilities
- Support functions like credentialing, appeals, utilization management (for advanced models)

3. Data, Analytics & Technology

- Create access to claims and clinical data for performance monitoring
- Develop dashboards and analytics to identify trends and track quality
- Design tools to validate attribution, assess risk, and connect with external data sources (e.g., HIEs)

4. Financial Management

- Conduct infrastructure cost-benefit analysis
- Create revenue modeling and gain/loss sharing methodologies
- Obtain capital reserves, reinsurance, and systems to pay claims (where applicable)

The framework does not prescribe who must deliver each service—it is adaptable based on CHC size, maturity, and market context. The full report also offers guidance to readers on how to make intentional build, buy, or partner decisions related to VBP infrastructure, with examples of real-world CHC infrastructure strategies highlighted throughout.

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