

Oak Street Medical picked for primary care initiative

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As part of a national effort, Oak Street Medical was recently chosen to be included in a select group of clinics to help test a new model for both service and delivery of health care to patients.

As we all know, the cost of health care is a growing burden on governments, employers and individuals. The system needs improvement. That is why we applied and were chosen to be part of a special health care trial, called the [Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative](#). The federal government's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services chose just 500 clinics nationwide including: Arkansas, Colorado, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Oregon.

Oak Street Medical is among those.

The project begins Nov. 1, 2012 and will run for four years, with the goal of reducing the overall cost, as well as improving health care quality. It will be a more focused approach on preventive care and engaging patients in the development of their individual care plan while assisting them

with both teaching and use of community resources to take control and improve their health care outcomes.

A new nurse practitioner, Cindy Smith, NP, will join our team on October 1, working directly with patients on the care coordination of community resources to assist them in achieving their goals. Please look for a future blog on Cindy.

The idea is to reinvest in primary care – that is, your regular day-to-day medical care provided by your doctor – using this comprehensive approach. Why? Studies show that primary care can reduce costs throughout the entire health care system.

The ultimate goal is for us to work collaboratively with our patients, identifying areas of need and ensuring they have all the tools and information they might require to manage their chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease or obesity. The hope is that by having more preventive care interactions with patients and engaging them in the creation and implementation of their individual goals, it will have an impact on health care outcomes. This, in turn, may decrease the number of emergency room visits and hospitalizations, which is the biggest avoidable cost to Medicare private insurers.

The Primary Care Initiative is trying to change the incentives. It will pay its participating practices a small monthly fee for each Medicare patient to establish additional resources that will achieve a more comprehensive delivery of health care. A few private health insurance plans in Oregon will also be participating in this initiative.

We will be providing ongoing data reports and patient outcomes that will be reviewed over time by Medicare. After two years, if the data shows that we have achieved our goals and decreased the cost of care, we will all benefit from the savings.

Our goal has always been and will continue to be, to provide the ultimate in patient care and customer service. With the help of our new nurse practitioner and the rest of our team members, we are pleased to be able to help develop what the new health care delivery system might look like.

Feel free to ask us about this initiative the next time you visit [our office](#) .

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