



# Independent Doctors in Mississippi and Tennessee are Making a Difference



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In communities across Mississippi and Tennessee, a group of primary care doctors are changing health care for their patients, their practices, and society: they are practicing the kind of patient-centered care that inspired them to go into medicine and their efforts are creating measurable value.

The work started in January of 2016 when 16 independent primary care offices across Mississippi and Tennessee took a chance on improving quality outcomes and lowering costs for their patients. These practices teamed up with Aledade to form the Aledade Mississippi Accountable Care Organization (ACO) that is now composed of 22 participants. [Aledade](#) partners with independent practices, health centers, and clinics [across the country to build](#) and lead ACOs anchored in primary care. As a part of the ACO, member practices work collaboratively and share in the savings they create.

The work paid off. The Aledade Mississippi ACO was successful in earning a quality score of 95% while [saving Medicare \\$9.8 million in 2017](#). We reduced hospital admissions by 9%, cut unnecessary home health spending by \$4.8 million and decreased hospital readmissions by 3%. We were also able to increase the number of office visits performed by primary care providers by 33% and increase the number of transitional care visits performed by 7%. These numbers mean healthier patients receiving higher quality care from their local primary care doctors - doctors who are

now better-positioned to sustain their independence.

Utilizing Aledade's combination of resources, technology, and local support, the practices in the Mississippi and Tennessee ACO have influenced a change in the health care system in our region. Dr. Katie Patterson, of Indianola Family Medical Group in Mississippi, recently stated that the ACO work has allowed her to better care for her patients with the knowledge of what's happening outside of the office walls. "It's provided me with greater knowledge of total patient care versus just the snapshot we are given in the office."

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Dr. Stephen Hammack of Premier Medical Group in Mississippi also vocalized the impact on his practice: "I am able to be more proactive about my patients' needs...and identify patients with needs that may have gone unnoticed previously."

We are achieving these results through a number of initiatives, such as "[Home for the Holidays](#)". There is often an uptick in illness as well as emergency room visits around the holidays and this program helped practices to educate their patients and keep them healthy. This program included proactively calling patients, mailing postcard reminders, and focused conversations during office visits. Practices used same day appointments and twenty-four hour call lines to help patients avoid spending their holidays in a hospital waiting room.

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Another initiative we pursued related to managing transitions of care through timely health information sharing with inpatient facilities. We work closely with a few local hospitals and utilize innovative strategies for gathering additional information from others. [One clinic](#) hired a nurse to follow patients from admission to discharge, ensuring the patient's needs were met and that they received timely follow up. Another clinic assigned a nurse to use the local hospital's health record to monitor the daily patient census, identifying when patients were discharged and then following up with them promptly.

While the revenue generated from savings is a great incentive to keep doing the work, one of our local medical directors, Dr. Syed Zaidi, points to a broader benefit: "We're able to be a better practice now. We can help our patients more efficiently and provide a higher level of quality care." That is the goal: efficient, quality care.