



Getting Past the Ding: How to Be Successful in Value Based Care without Getting Your Feelings Hurt



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Every day, physicians are evaluated by a myriad of sources. Think of all the websites with provider ratings: Health Grades, Angie's List, and even Yelp. These sites ask patients to review the quality of care provided by healthcare providers, and yet give no control to those who are being reviewed. Now, consider insurance companies and other payers who may provide scorecards based on patient metrics. As physicians, we may see a patient four times out of the year for 15 minutes, but we have no control over how they spend the other 8,759 hours of the year.

Also, take into consideration that no physician gets a perfect score across all of these scorecards. In today's medicine, anything short of perfection is a "ding." The reality is that dings are part of the new value-based world, and it's important that we recognize them for what they are—opportunities for improvement rather than points of frustration.

Let's face it, medical providers do not like to be judged. Many of us, as physicians, have succeeded in our professions due to our hard work and dedication. But, more importantly, our pursuit of excellence is what sets us apart. Perfection is the gold standard and anything less will not suffice. We believe that our patients' lives depend upon it.

When we see scorecards produced by a payer and see that we do not meet or exceed all measures, many of us find this as being insufficient in the care we provide. As a medical

director for Aledade, my conversation with primary care physicians in our national accountable care organization (ACO) network generally go like this:

The Over-Utilization Ding: Frequent Emergency Department (ED) Visits

"You mean to tell me I'm getting dinged for that guy? There is no way I can keep him out of the emergency room. He loves going there."

The opportunity for over utilizers "frequent flyers" is to have them utilize you more. Less ED visits are a step in the right

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direction, so rather than trying to "fix" or "make perfect" one frequent flyer, we will instead attempt to reduce a few visits among all of your frequent flyers. We do this by helping practices expand same day access, teach patients to call the physician first, and add robust care management that targets patients who "love" the ED.

The Over-Budget Ding: Costs More Than Expected

“So what you’re saying is that I am getting dinged for his liver transplant? How am I supposed to control his costs? I am just his primary care physician.”

The opportunity for high cost patients is to start thinking ahead. Ask yourself the “surprise question” are the high costs due to a specific medical condition, like cancer? Would it surprise you if the patient died in the next six to 12 months? If the answer is no, has the patient or family received an end-of-life conversation? If this is not an end-of-life situation, is chronic care management appropriate? Are the costs episodic? If so, there might not be much that you can do besides embrace the ding.

Embrace the ding and let it be your call to action. Keep providing the best quality care to your patients, always with positive outcomes in mind.

The Quality Measure Ding: Failure to Meet a Seemingly Arbitrary Content Management System Defined By Quality Measures that Make No Sense Clinically

“You mean to tell me I’m getting dinged by a patient with diabetes, who refuses to take my medical advice? I am going to dismiss that patient from my practice so I never get dinged again.”

This particular ding can provide the opportunity to improve quality measure performance for an entire population. Can the measure be addressed across the entire population? Are you leveraging standing orders? Are you seeing poorly controlled patients more frequently until they reach a specific goal? Do you recognize the opportunity to improve your risk coding for these complex patients?

It’s time to rethink the ding. It can feel frustrating to have someone tell you that you are not doing your job well, but embrace the ding and let it be your call to action. Keep providing the best quality care to your patients, always with positive outcomes in mind. If you get dinged, then you will know where you need to get better. Focus on providing better care at affordable costs. And, if you need help, talk with Aledade and learn more about how we can support your practice in the transition to value-based care. We promise, we won’t ding you.

To learn more about Aledade and the Aledade ACO currently being formed for independent primary care physicians in Ohio, contact Director of Strategic Provider Recruitment Beth Schindele at bschindele@aledade.com or call 202.810.5685. For more information, you can also visit the Aledade website.