



How Independent Practices are Succeeding in Louisiana



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As a primary care physician in a small, independent practice, my focus has always been on doing what is best for my patients and community. Over the past twenty years, I've continued to come back to this idea. My practice, Scott Family Physicians, has become a trusted, connected part of the community. Being an independent physician offers many benefits to my patients. One example is the freedom to have open scheduling in my practice, allowing patients to set same day appointments, instead of an expensive, unnecessary visit to the ER. It also allows me to serve my community as the high school football team's doctor every Friday in the fall.

But, running an independent primary care practice also comes with challenges and tough decisions. As the shift to value-based care gained traction, it became clear that this new model was a great way for primary care practices to be rewarded for the attentive, personal care we provide our patients.

That's why, two years ago, I decided to join the Aledade Accountable Care Organization (ACO) with other local Acadiana primary care physicians. I knew what this meant for my practice, as the transformation to value-based care is

an investment of time, staff, and finances, but was confident that we could succeed with our partner independent physicians in the ACO and with Aledade.

In our first year providing value-based care to our patients covered by Blue Cross in its value program, Quality Blue, we saw great results. Not only did our patients receive better quality care, our ACO achieved significant savings.

And, I am proud to say, now as the Medical Director of the Aledade Louisiana ACOs with over 30 of the highest quality primary care practices in Louisiana, my practice's decision to embrace value-based care is showing returns in a big way.

Through the Aledade ACO, our group of local, independent primary care practices partnered with one of the largest payers in Louisiana, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana.



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Through our clinical initiatives, population health management, and increased ability to access and share data, we reduced our patients' total cost of care by 8 percent. But, more importantly, we kept them healthier. Our ACO kept patients out of the hospital and ER, reducing admittances from 65 to 57 per 1,000 patients. By focusing on chronic disease management, we helped increase our patients' rate

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of control of diabetes (up 13 percent) and hypertension (up 20 percent) significantly. Through improved visibility into our patient population, we could proactively reach out to high-risk patients, identify patients in need of a PCP visit, and conduct more preventive care – such as mammograms, which we saw rise 5 percent across the ACO.

For my fellow physicians and I in the ACO, this is a sign of our hard work paying off. Many of our practices had been delivering this kind of care for years, but in Aledade's ACO model we now have the technology, access to data, and ability to participate in value programs, like Blue Cross' Quality Blue program, to see the benefits and results for our patients and practice. For my practice this means we kept our patients healthier and the savings we achieved let me breathe easier as a small business owner. The savings

we shared in, can be the difference between keeping clinic doors open and remaining independent or having to close a practice. Having success in these programs means I'll be able to continue to offer innovative care, right here in Louisiana.

Primary care practices are uniquely able to succeed in value-based care. With this early success, we will continue to work to transform our practice to deliver better care and improved health outcomes, at lower costs.