



Can Implementing Medicaid Managed Care Address Health Disparities?

Looking Back at Other State's Experiences and Looking Forward to North Carolina's Transition

Presentation to NCCOMeT

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Today we will cover:

- Project overview
- Early literature scan results
- Quantitative analysis
- Qualitative analysis
- Opportunities for engagement and next steps



Project Team

Urban Institute

Brigette Courtot (Project Director and Qualitative Task Leader)

Lisa Dubay (Senior Advisor)

Emily Johnston (Quantitative Task Leader)

Eva Allen (Qualitative Team)

Dulce Gonzalez (Qualitative Team)

Clara Alvarez Caraveo (Research Assistant)

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

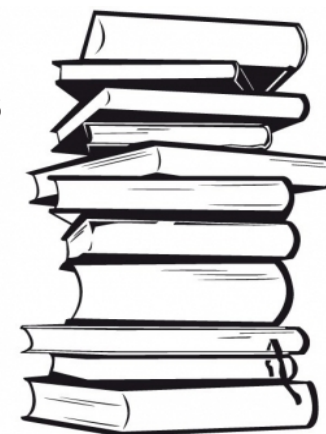
Krista Perreira (Qualitative Task Consultant)

Project Overview (Fall 2020 – Fall 2021)

- *Primary Research Question:* Are Medicaid reforms resulting in more equitable health outcomes for North Carolinians?
- *Mixed Methods:* Qualitative interviews and focus groups; quantitative baseline analyses
- *Intermediate Goal:* Provide information to help stakeholders understand effects of Medicaid reform and value-based care on health outcomes
- *Ultimate Goal:* Support health system reform that reduces inequities and improves population health
- *Funder:* Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust

Literature Scan: Impacts of Shift to Medicaid Managed Care (MMC) in Other States

- **Purpose:** inform research questions and understand evidence base for disparities-focused studies of Medicaid managed care implementation
- **Focus:** quasi-experimental designs, comparisons of outcomes for Medicaid beneficiaries enrolled in MMC and those enrolled in fee-for-service Medicaid, outcomes for perinatal and child populations
- **Preliminary Findings:** mixed results (positive, negative, or neutral) related to MMC's impact on access and quality-related health outcomes
- **Observations:** focus on roll-out of MMC in the 1990s, many single county, hospital service area, or state studies, limited consideration of specific policies or practices within MMC



Literature Scan: Impacts of Shift to Medicaid Managed Care

Perinatal health highlights

- “no evidence that the move to managed care within Medicaid resulted in improvements in prenatal care or in infant health nationally” – Kaestner, Dubay, Kenney 2005
- “black-Hispanic disparities [in infant health] widen... Our results are consistent with a risk-selection model whereby capitation incentivizes competing plans to offer better (worse) care to low- (high-) cost clients to retain (avoid) them in the future” – Kuziemko, Meckel, Rossin-Slater 2018

Child health highlights

- “Both Medicaid HMO and PCCM plans can have important impacts on health care utilization, access, and satisfaction. Some impacts may be positive (e.g., less ED use and more outpatient provider use), although concern about increasing challenges in access to care and satisfaction is also warranted.” – Baker & Afendulis 2005
- “We find evidence that MMC has the possibility to reduce racial/ethnic disparities in professional utilization. More work is needed to determine which managed care program characteristics drive this result.” – Marton, Yelowitz, Shores, Talbert 2015

MMC program features highlights

- “The plan that capitated primary care physicians and contracted out many administrative responsibilities to an experienced managed care organization achieved significant reductions in outpatient and professional utilization” – Marton, Yelowitz, Talbert 2014

Quantitative Analysis

1. What was the state of perinatal health for **Medicaid-insured women and infants** in NC prior to Medicaid managed care transition?
 - a) Comparisons by race/ethnicity, NC county, and to other states

2. What was the state of child health for **Medicaid-insured children** in NC prior to Medicaid managed care transition?
 - a) Comparisons by race/ethnicity, urban/rural, and to other states

Quantitative Analysis

- Pregnant women, new mothers, and infants
 - Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) 2014-2018
 - Survey of women's experiences before, during, and after pregnancy linked to birth certificates
 - Prenatal care initiation, pregnancy intention, postpartum visit receipt, maternal smoking behavior, low birthweight, preterm birth, and postpartum contraception use
 - Vital Statistics Natality Records from CDC WONDER
 - Publicly available state and county-level birth certificate data
 - Low birthweight, preterm birth, c-section delivery, payer at delivery

Quantitative Analysis

- Child health
 - National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) 2016-2019
 - Survey of child health and well-being
 - Health status, access to care, prevalence of special health care needs, experiences in health system

Qualitative Analysis

- Beneficiary and provider perspectives on how shift to Medicaid managed care is affecting patient outcomes
- Two rounds of pre-implementation data collection
 - Stakeholder interviews
 - Beneficiary focus groups/interviews
- Virtual with statewide scope

Stakeholder Interviews (Winter 2020-21)

- Medicaid officials, MCOs and other implementation contractors, provider associations, consumer advocates, CBOs working on outreach/education (and more)
- Example research questions:
 - What outreach and enrollment strategies is the state planning to implement to enroll beneficiaries in managed care plans?
 - How is the COVID-19 pandemic informing design and implementation of managed care?
 - What concerns do stakeholders have related to the implementation of Medicaid managed care? What opportunities does the transition to Medicaid managed care generate?
 - How do providers expect the Medicaid managed care transition to affect the way they practice?
 - How do stakeholders expect the Medicaid managed care transition to affect health equity for perinatal and child health?

Beneficiary Focus Groups/Interviews (Spring 2021)

- Target populations: pregnant women, parents of children with special health care needs, people with chronic conditions
- Small group discussions or 1-on-1 interviews with beneficiaries from communities around the state
- Example research questions:
 - What are beneficiaries' impressions of access and quality of care under the current health care delivery system? What is going well, and what needs to be improved?
 - How do beneficiaries expect the way they get health care to change with the implementation of Medicaid managed care?
 - Where are beneficiaries getting information about the transition to managed care? How helpful is that information? What questions or concerns do they have?

Opportunities for Engagement and Next Steps



- Feedback on more specific research questions
- Connections to stakeholders, especially for qualitative data collection from beneficiaries
- Partner w/CBOs to help plan our focus groups/interviews

Thank You!

You can reach us at:

Brigette Courtot

bcourtot@urban.org

Emily Johnston

ejohnston@urban.org