





for patients with multiple, complex and ongoing care needs.

Health plans and government programs need to support these activities through the re-engineering of health policy and financing and by providing benefit packages that address chronic illnesses. They also need to recognize that external disease or care management programs operated by health plans and vendors can go only so far in meeting the needs of those with volatile, complex chronic conditions who inevitably require that the care coordination be internalized within their clinical team.

Federal-level improvements that would help include:

- Increasing Medicare payment to physicians who specialize in care for high-risk patients to adequately compensate them for monitoring the constantly changing health status of patients with complex chronic conditions and for coordinating the multiple care plans, treatments, prescriptions, and other services that their patients require.
- Creating incentives for providers to target complex care patients and employ methods that optimize quality and cost performance as a person's care needs evolve over time and across care settings.
- Developing quality measures that are more appropriate for persons with multiple, complex chronic conditions to adequately account for the cumulative effects of multiple interventions.
- Identifying federal funds to help hospitals and health systems develop the local infrastructure needed to support interdisciplinary care teams and coordinate care across settings.
- Integrating Medicare and Medicaid financing and regulatory oversight for dually-eligible persons. Pooled, risk-adjusted payment methods should be developed.
- Allowing flexibility for qualified case managers to work with Medicare beneficiaries and their families to identify and substitute appropriate alternative services to improve the effectiveness of care for Medicare beneficiaries with multiple, complex chronic conditions.
- Streamlining regulatory oversight to enable providers to work more closely together to improve continuity of care.

The AHA will work toward improving the quality of care and life for the chronically ill and will advocate changes in the payment system that reward efforts to coordinate care across all settings for patients with chronic illnesses.