

Coffee and Contracts summary
Preparing Yourself to Approach Contracting
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Presenters

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Key Takeaways – Main session

Market awareness and value proposition: Identify payer's top priorities

- CBOs/CCHs should conduct a scan of the payer's priority populations and unmet needs, and how it can help meet those needs. From this information, a CBO or CCH can create a value proposition pitch.
- Use publicly available information like state Medicaid contract, Medicare Advantage filings, STARS ratings, and HEDIS scores.
- Value proposition example:
 - Somerville Cambridge Elder Services has a robust, responsive case management framework that addresses social determinants of health (SDoH). Their real-time case management approach allows them to compensate for health system staffing shortages for care coordination.

Management and operational readiness: Assess your capacity to fulfill payer's contractual requirements

- Organizations should assess their infrastructure to learn if its existing workflows and processes can accommodate the payer's data exchange and reporting, quality assessment and improvement, and billing requirements.
- Organizational assessment can look like....
 - Analyzing staff positions to understand if they can accommodate volume and staff skills are aligned with needs to meet demands of the contract.
 - Reviewing current data collection to assess whether it is tracking measures that are important to the payer.
 - Understanding how new contract demands can impact the existing culture at the organization.
- Example:
 - At Somerville Cambridge Elder Services, one of the things they try to focus on is equipping the leadership team and staff with tools and knowledge to understand the "why" for contract requirements (e.g., why contracting is important to the organization; why they need to change internal practices to meet contract requirements for IT, performance measures, etc.). When people understand why practices are changing, it becomes easier to embed the new practices in the culture and fulfill the necessary contract requirements.

Risk tolerance: Assess your risk tolerance

- Organizations should evaluate their overall risk tolerance for withstanding changes in volume flow, culture, and leaders' and staff's perspectives on risks and shifts in practices.
- The organization will need to gain buy-in from leadership and the board to tolerate negative volume flow. There will also need to be buy-in from staff to tolerate culture and practice shifts related to the working in a contract agreement.
- Example:
 - Age Span had a robust contract with a Medicaid Accountable Care Organization (ACO) to provide screening and food access services to their members. However, when the ACO was dissolved, Age Span spent about a year planning how their Medicaid population was now going to receive services. In the end, they took a risk and agreed to a contract that was less than optimal with the goal of negotiating a new contract with a reorganized ACO. Age Span's strategy required the organizational leaders and board to be bought into the long-term goal of improving the contract after a period of volume deficit.