



Financial Alignment Initiative and the Ombudsman Program

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Duals Demonstration Ombudsman
Technical Assistance Program




What is the Financial Alignment Initiative?

- Partnership between Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and select states to improve care for dual eligible individuals and better align the financing of Medicare and Medicaid
- Two models:
 - Capitated Model
 - Managed Fee for Service Model

State Demonstration Approval Process

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- To participate a State had to submit a proposal outlining its proposed approach in 2012 (26 states).

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- CMS evaluated each proposal to determine whether it has met the CMS standards and conditions.

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- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place once a State proposal has met certain standards and conditions

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- For States pursuing Capitated Model, States must work with CMS to select qualified health plans that will result in a Three Way Contract.

Signed MOUs - Status

Capitated Model

California, Connecticut,
Illinois, Massachusetts, New
York, Ohio, Rhode Island,
South Carolina, Texas, Virginia

Managed Fee for Service

Colorado, Washington

Alternative Model

Minnesota

Support for Ombudsman Programs

- CMS provides funding to support the creation and/or expansion of ombudsman programs for beneficiaries of the Financial Alignment Initiative
- Ensure that the beneficiaries of these models have access to person-centered assistance
- Inform States, Plans, CMS, and other stakeholders regarding beneficiary experience with Plans and make systemic recommendations

Activities of an Ombudsman Program

- Empower beneficiaries and support them in resolving problems they have with their health care, behavioral health care, and long term services and supports
- Investigate and resolve beneficiary problems with Plans
- Provide systems-level analysis and recommendations

Ombudsman Characteristics

- Credibility with beneficiaries
- Free of conflict of interest
- Knowledgeable in the areas relevant to beneficiary service
- Confidential
- Protect individuals from retaliation
- Skilled in negotiation

Ombudsman Program Requirements

- Free of charge to beneficiaries
- Accessible by phone, web, and email
- Ability to provide in-person access when necessary
- Ability to provide culturally and linguistically competent services
- Compliance with HIPAA Privacy Rule and other relevant privacy laws and regulations

Duals Demo Ombudsman TA Program

- Interagency Agreement between CMS and the Administration for Community Living (ACL)
- ACL provides technical assistance to states developing ombudsman programs under the Financial Alignment Initiative
- 12 demonstration ombudsman programs

Operational Models for Ombudsman Programs

- States have flexibility in developing their demonstration ombudsman program.
 - States leveraging LTC Ombuds Program -IL, OH, SC, VA
 - States using contracted organizations - CA, CO, MA, NY, RI, MI
 - States using existing ombuds programs - TX, WA (e.g. Texas Health and Human Services Office of the Ombudsman)
- Regardless of model, all programs receiving federal funding must meet requirements in the CMS [Funding Opportunity Announcement](#).

Duals Demonstration Ombudsman Data

- From 2014 to 2015 five operational programs
 - Served 21,122 beneficiaries
 - Identified benefit/access and enrollment/disenrollment as the most commonly reported complaint categories
 - Reached more than 31,000 individuals through outreach and educational events.

Examples of Ombudsman Practices

- Massachusetts produced a series of “[Know Your Rights](#)” [videos](#) in various languages.
- Massachusetts also trained health plan staff on disability awareness and cultural competence.
- New York created a [Guide Me Tool](#) on their website to help individuals with LTSS needs select health insurance.
- Ohio worked with demonstration plans to create magnets with the Ombudsman contact information for beneficiaries.

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For More Information

- Office of Duals Demonstration Ombudsman
Technical Assistance Program

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Community Living

Washington DC 20201

Website:

<http://acl.gov/Programs/CDAP/ODDTAP/index.aspx>

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