

## State at a Glance: Alaska

### Overview

In February 2010, the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#) awarded grants to 10 States under a 5-year, \$100 million effort to improve health care quality and delivery systems for children enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Funded by the [Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 \(CHIPRA\)](#), the [Quality Demonstration Grant Program](#) aims to identify effective, replicable strategies for enhancing quality of care for children. Because some grantee States are partnering with other States, the grants will support the implementation and evaluation of quality improvement strategies for children in a total of 18 States under five broad categories.<sup>1</sup>

Alaska is working with **Oregon** (one of the 10 grantees) and **West Virginia** in a tri-State partnership to implement projects in three of the five grant categories:

- Showing how a core set of children's quality measures can be used to improve quality of care for children.
- Promoting the use of health information technology (IT) to enhance service quality and care coordination.
- Implementing a more comprehensive provider-based model of service delivery.

### Alaska's Objectives

In Alaska, a large proportion of the child population lives in rural areas and in low-income families. Alaska is working with three practice sites to implement a medical home model suited to the State's rural and frontier nature. The State will also work with the sites to collect, report, and test the use of an initial core set of children's quality measures, improve care coordination, and improve health IT infrastructure by encouraging use of electronic health records (EHRs) and linking providers to the support and resources of the State's health information exchange (HIE).

#### *Working with the Initial Core Set of Children's Quality Measures*

Alaska will collect, report, and test a subset of the initial core set of children's quality measures and assess their meaningfulness and feasibility while incorporating the measures into a quality measurement framework to identify gaps and areas for improvement. The [Children and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative \(CAHMI\)](#), a national initiative out of the Oregon Health Sciences University, will develop an Alaska-specific quality profile using existing population-based measures highlighting needs for quality improvement based on data from the [2009/2010 National Survey of Children's Health](#) and the [2011 National Survey of Children with Special Healthcare Needs](#).

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<sup>1</sup> The five categories are projects that (1) show how a core set of children's quality measures can be used to improve quality of care for children, (2) promote the use of health information technology to enhance service quality and care coordination, (3) implement new or more comprehensive provider-based models of service delivery, (4) demonstrate the impact of a model electronic health record format for children, and (5) test an approach to quality improvement of a State's own design.

### *Using Health IT to Improve Child Health Care Quality*

Alaska is working to implement a statewide health IT infrastructure and will support the three practice sites in establishing practice-level health IT systems. Alaska will:

- Assist with developing an HIE to build the capacity of the sites and the State to report on selected quality measures with data compiled from EHR systems.
- Connect providers to HIE resources and supports.
- Encourage meaningful use of EHRs and personal health records (PHRs) as a communication tool.
- Develop a network for provider clinics and practices to exchange data with each other and with their patients.

### *Assessing a Provider-Based Model of Care*

Alaska has developed its own definition of the medical home that fits with its rural and frontier nature. The State is contracting with three practice sites—one representing the largest tribal provider of services to children and the other two representing Section 330 Community Health Centers—to achieve the goals anchored to their medical home definition and to conduct quality improvement efforts. Representatives of these practices will participate in a learning collaborative to improve and share their knowledge about implementing a medical home and to measure its impact on children’s health care quality.

### **Evaluation Questions**

The national evaluation team will gather information from Alaska to address a wide range of questions about the implementation and outcomes of its efforts, including:

- How did Alaska use the tri-State partnership to implement best practices in quality measurement and health IT applications?
- What strategies were used to connect providers to HIE resources and supports?
- To what extent was Alaska’s medical home model successful in improving the quality of health care for children?
- What are the key lessons from Alaska’s experience that would be useful for other rural and/or frontier States?

### **Learn More**

This information is current as of March 2012, 2 years after grant award. To learn more about the projects that Alaska is implementing under the CHIPRA Quality Demonstration Grant Program, please contact:

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To learn more about the national evaluation of the CHIPRA Quality Demonstration Grant Program, visit the evaluation’s Web page at <http://www.ahrq.gov/chipra/demoeval>.