



Chronic Care Management (CCM) programs are rising in popularity. With the increase of chronic diseases in high-risk populations, rising healthcare costs, and the need to better manage Medicare patients with long-term chronic conditions, more hospitals and health systems around the country are implementing CCM programs.

CCM programs can [make a huge difference for health systems](#) by improving patient care and satisfaction, enhancing monitoring of longitudinal patient data, eliminating staffing burdens, and maximizing financial performance. This is especially important as healthcare treatment continues to shift to value-based care. In the future, almost every measure of health system success in value-based care will be supported by the patient engagements that occur between office visits. While the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recognizes Chronic Care Management as a critical primary care service that contributes to better patient health, they also have specific enrollment eligibility, treatment delivery expectations, and coding and billing protocols that need to be followed. For these reasons, many healthcare organizations are now finding that an outsourced CCM program has notable advantages, without all the additional burdens of trying to start and scale a new in-house program.

Outsourcing to a CCM Company = No Staffing, Training, or Management Required

A successful CCM program delivers optimal continuity of care by staying in frequent touch with patients between office visits. But this amount of contact requires dedicated nursing staff that have both the expertise—and time—to engage with patients.

Given the shortages in physician and nursing labor, building an in-house CCM program will require hiring additional skilled nursing care providers. These professionals are increasingly difficult to recruit and increase costs through higher salaries and benefits. And once recruited,

you must train and manage the nursing team to ensure your CCM program runs efficiently and effectively.

Partnering with an outsourced CCM company gives health systems immediate access to highly skilled chronic care RNs and LPNs, without having to recruit, train, and oversee them—or reallocate important resources away from other departments.

An outsourced CCM program can significantly enhance the capacity of physicians and support staff at the point of care. While it is expected that a CCM nursing team requires some time from providers and clinical staff for patient interventions, this is balanced by the extensive support those CCM nurses provide to patients—tasks that would otherwise fall on your in-house team. This approach helps to expand provider and staff capacity without adding to their burden. This is especially crucial as a 2022 study by the American Nurses Foundation and the American Nurses Association found that 52 percent of nurses are considering leaving their jobs due to insufficient staffing, inability to deliver quality care, and negative impacts on their health.

Things to Consider:

Many CCM vendors use a nursing call center approach, which can mean your patients will be speaking to a new person every time they interact with your CCM program. If patients don't have regular interactions with the same dedicated nurse, they're unlikely to build trust and rapport, and that can impact overall patient satisfaction and program retention. Providers, too, like having the same nurse interacting with their patients and clinical team.

At Signallamp Health, chronic care patients and their primary care team are assigned the same nurse each month. This continuity of care builds deepening relationships of trust between patient and nurse. Nurses are also able to learn more about the patient's social determinants of health, those non-clinical factors that most patients won't reveal until they have built a trusted relationship with the nurse.

Some CCM vendors allow Medical Assistants or "Health Coaches" in direct patient care. While this is permitted within CCM Medicare guidelines, you want nurses operating at the top of their licensed skill set, so they don't just act as a liaison between patient and your in-house medical team. RNs and LPNs are trained and licensed to provide comprehensive chronic care, so select a vendor who only utilizes those nurses who have deep clinical expertise.

No New Tech = Faster CCM Program Launch

If you've hired a new staff of nurses and managers to oversee your soon-to-be-launched CCM program, your next step is to provide them with the tools for the job. The problem? EHRs aren't set up to accommodate the operational needs of CCM, from nurses who manage their call queues to managers who must monitor performance and keep their nurse team accountable to quality KPIs. And that means either investing in new technology or dramatically customizing your existing EHR to fit a purpose for which it was never designed for, or both.

Outsourcing, however, takes away this dependency because the nursing staff is not your own, so the CCM vendor will manage all the program logistics on your behalf.

Avoiding the complexities of integrating new technologies also dramatically accelerates program rollout by default, so a health system can achieve full operational functionality within a few short weeks, as opposed to building or integrating new in-house technology, which can take many months (and resources) to bring online.

Things to Consider:

Be wary of outsourced CCM vendors who want to integrate their proprietary technology into your EHR. This can result in IT and administrative red tape, and delays in execution. Most CCM vendors also force your healthcare providers to review call notes in emailed PDF attachments or to log into their proprietary portals, which will stress and reduce the likelihood of them supporting your CCM program.

With Signallamp Health, a health system need never be concerned about these issues. Our nurses operate and document directly in the existing EHR, using existing clinical workflows, providing transparency and eliminating the worry of third-party tools or integrations altogether.

Guaranteed Financial Performance

Health systems who hire the right outsourced CCM company will find immediate financial rewards from reduced administrative overhead, predictable patient enrollment, additional net revenue from reimbursements and revenue-sharing, and no out-of-pocket costs.

Greater Enrollment and Retention

Many health systems and physician groups we've engaged have tried to implement their own in-house CCM programs, with most reporting an enrollment rate below 5 percent among eligible patients. Given these challenges, investing significant time and resources to launch a CCM program that struggles at the enrollment phase is a risk that many organizations are hesitant to take.

Outsourced CCM companies have tried-and-tested enrollment processes, patient marketing materials, and dedicated staff in place to encourage patient enrollment, relieving health systems of trying to figure out these critical workflows on their own. As an example, health systems using Signallamp Health see an average of 65 percent of eligible patients enrolling in chronic care management, a key driver in having their CCM program become rapidly scalable, profitable, and self-sustaining.

In addition, established CCM vendors like Signallamp have optimized their service offerings to deliver upwards of 90% guaranteed patient retention.

No Additional Staffing or Technology Investments

Since hiring additional staff and technology expenses will not be an issue with an outsourced CCM program, those expenses are eliminated immediately. And because a health system's current staff won't be burdened with deploying or participating in the CCM program, there will be a decrease in their non-billable time and burden as well.

Measurable KPIs

Once a CCM program is up and running, the focus shifts to optimizing its performance and return on investment. A reliable CCM provider employs specific methods to track and analyze key performance indicators (KPIs) such as patient enrollment numbers, opt-outs, and retention rates, as well as operational activities like medication reconciliations, achievement of care plan goals, and appointment scheduling. This continuous monitoring of KPIs enables health systems to effectively demonstrate the tangible benefits and value of their investment in chronic care management.

Zero Out-of-Pocket Costs

Finally, an outsourced program like the one offered by Signallamp Health is fully funded via profit-sharing in existing CCM and RPM reimbursements, so your health system is guaranteed zero out-of-pocket expenses to get started and increased net revenue without having to lift a finger.

Take the First Step in Outsourcing Chronic Care Management

If you would like to implement a CCM program, outsourcing is a viable and recommended path. Signallamp works as an extension of your providers, helping you to harness your physician-patient relationships to increase access to care, improve outcomes, and feed longitudinal patient engagement. We offer white glove, on demand, nursing capacity, dedicated only to your providers and patients and tailored to your workflows. Our unique remotely embedded nurse care model enables our nurses to become a truly integrated extension of your existing facility-base care team, all at no up-front cost to you. Our success is directly linked with your success. Ready to improve patient care with a Chronic Care Management Company? Learn how Signallamp Health can help you Take Care Further™ with remotely embedded Chronic Care Management. [Schedule a consultation with us, here.](#)