

CIVHC – CENTER FOR IMPROVING VALUE IN HEALTH CARE

This organization came into being as the brainchild of the 2008 Blue Ribbon Commission for Health Care Reform. Originally part of state government, it transitioned to a non-profit in 2011, and now receives funding from a number of foundations. Local provider Karen Zink is a member of the board of directors, along with representatives of the business community, insurance companies, hospitals, providers and others.

Its three main foci are:

- to increase transparency and accountability statewide, particularly through the development of an All-Payer Claims Database (APCD)
- to improve the health care payment system
- to improve the health care delivery system.

APCD, which is expected to generate its first reports in 3Q 2012, is collecting claim information from across the state; it hopes thus to be able to present information allowing purchasers, payers, providers and policymakers to make informed decisions about the relative cost and effectiveness of care in a variety of settings; as well as to pinpoint and address more localized problems.

CIVHC intends to push improvements in the health care payment system by instituting, among others, “bundling” of payments, initially in areas such as orthopedic surgery; this means the organization providing the care (think Mercy) charges a fixed fee for, say, a hip replacement (from original diagnosis to post-operative check-ups), and then that organization is responsible for paying all the other providers and entities involved. This encourages those involved to communicate about ways to improve care and save costs. Another example of “bundling” would be if a provider was paid a fixed rate per year to manage the treatment of a group of diabetes patients and was responsible for the outcomes.

To improve the health care delivery system, CIVHC intends to push for more integration (such as setting up “medical homes” which treat all aspects of a patient’s care), using “care coordinators” who oversee groups of patients, and other methods to make health care delivery more efficient and cost-effective.

CIVHC recognizes that there is no “one size fits all” in the health care arena, which is part of the reason they were here, and in Telluride and Cortez, to collect information from groups like CHAC about the special needs and opportunities of communities like ours.

-Jill Patton