

LTC ACO Team Message: *Setting the Pace*

As we move through the first months of the 2026 Performance Year, we are encouraged by the momentum already underway across the LTC ACO community. Early alignment, steady execution, and thoughtful collaboration have set a strong pace, and we are very excited to share the next steps in how we will continue to support our partners in the months ahead.

CLEARER INSIGHT, STRONGER ALIGNMENT

This year, we are advancing our analytics infrastructure to provide a more unified and beneficiary-centered view of performance. Our goal is simple: ensure that clinical, quality, utilization, and financial insights are aligned, accessible, and actionable.

By strengthening our centralized data systems and enhancing reporting tools, we are creating a consistent framework where practices can see their performance clearly and act with confidence. This approach connects the full picture of care delivery - from physician visits and quality measures to utilization trends and patient population management. The result is clearer visibility into gaps, progress, and opportunity.

COORDINATED, PROACTIVE SUPPORT

Insight drives progress, but partnership sustains it.

In 2026, we are continuing to refine how we engage with and support participating groups. Our focus is consistent communication, clear pathways for collaboration, and practical resources that translate data into action.

Expanded education sessions, office hours, roundtables, and enhanced reporting discussions will continue to strengthen shared understanding. We are also building additional quick-reference materials and solution guides to meet practices at varying stages of performance.

LOOKING AHEAD

The early months of the year are about establishing rhythm and direction. As 2026 progresses, we remain focused on strengthening the infrastructure that supports consistent performance across the network.

By enhancing both the insight we provide and the partnership we deliver, we are reinforcing a foundation for sustainable improvement and shared success.

We thank you, sincerely, for your continued partnership!

Clinical Spotlight: *Introducing the LTC ACO Way*

We are very excited to formally introduce the LTC ACO Way - our beneficiary and client-centric clinical operations model designed to support providers with clear expectations, practical tools, and defined timelines for success.

The LTC ACO Way translates our value-based care model into a clear quarterly action plan. It brings together clinical priorities, performance requirements, and utilization management strategies into a coordinated system that supports consistent execution throughout the year.

WHAT IT INCLUDES

At its core, the LTC ACO Way provides a structured monthly and quarterly breakdown of key activities, including:

- ◆ Physician Visits (PVs) and Quality Measures (QMs) with defined completion expectations
- ◆ Targeted clinical initiatives that support key performance goals, including timely completion of advance care planning discussions, transitions of care visits with medication reconciliation, and early identification of interference issues and quality gaps.
- ◆ Identification and proactive management of high-risk patient populations at the patient, provider, and facility levels to help reduce hospitalizations and lower total cost of care.

Rather than reacting to performance at year-end, this approach supports steady, measurable progress across the entire performance year.

SOLUTION DRIVEN SUPPORT

The LTC ACO Way will be supported by an expanded solution set designed to meet practices where they are. These resources will include:

- ◆ One-page Quick Start guides
- ◆ Detailed process and solution decks
- ◆ FAQ documents
- ◆ In-depth instructions outlining best-practice workflows

Additionally, we are developing enhanced client dashboards and customized reports based on engagement level and operational needs. These tools range from detailed spreadsheets to patient-specific metric reports, helping practices gain clearer visibility and actionable insight.

The LTC ACO Way represents the evolution of work many of our practices are already doing exceptionally well. By formalizing these efforts into a defined clinical operations model, we are strengthening our ability to drive performance, support sustainable improvement, and deliver predictable value-based results across the LTC ACO network.

We look forward to building on this foundation together throughout PY26.

Celebrating Our 2025 Advance Care Planning Champions!

Advance Care Planning is one of the most powerful ways we support high-risk beneficiaries in the long-term care and assisted living communities we serve. These conversations ensure that care aligns with each resident's goals, values, and preferences - strengthening coordination, clarity, and patient-centered decision-making.

During the 2025 Performance Year, several participating practices demonstrated exceptional commitment to completing Advance Care Plans for identified high-risk beneficiaries. We are proud to recognize these groups as our 2025 Advance Care Planning Champions.

This achievement reflects meaningful clinical engagement, thoughtful documentation, and a shared dedication to improving the quality of care for some of our most vulnerable beneficiaries.

We are deeply grateful for your partnership and your continued leadership in advancing patient-centered care across our ACO network.

Looking ahead, we also encourage practices to recognize National Healthcare Decisions Day on April 16, 2026. This annual initiative helps raise awareness about the importance of advance care planning and encourages individuals to have meaningful conversations about their healthcare wishes.

To learn more about how you can participate or access helpful resources, visit: [The Conversation Project \(NHDD\)](#)

Regulatory Updates

MEDICARE POLICY UPDATE: 2026

Congress and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have finalized several major decisions shaping Medicare telehealth and value based payment policy for 2026. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026 (H.R. 7148), signed February 3, 2026, serves as the foundation for these changes.

ADVANCED APM INCENTIVE BONUS UPDATES:

3.1% Bonus Reinstated for 2026 – The appropriations act revives a 3.1% incentive payment for clinicians who qualify as Advanced APM participants, helping maintain momentum in value based care programs.

Qualifying Thresholds Lowered and Frozen – The law lowers and freezes the Qualifying APM Participant (QP) thresholds back to 50% from 2025 threshold of 75%, making it easier for clinicians to earn the bonus and avoid MIPS reporting.

Transition from the Original 5% Bonus – While MACRA's original 5% lump sum bonus has expired, the 3.1% payment paired with a higher APM conversion factor (0.75%) compared with non QPs (0.25%), serves as a temporary bridge to sustain participation.

Regulatory Updates (continued)

MEDICARE TELEHEALTH FLEXIBILITIES EXTENDED THROUGH 2027

The new appropriations law prevents the expiration of pandemic era telehealth rules that were set to end in January 2026. Key provisions now remain in place through December 31, 2027, ensuring continuity for patients and clinicians.

What Stays in Place:

- ◆ Home as an originating site, allowing beneficiaries to receive telehealth from home.
- ◆ Audio only telehealth, preserving access for patients without video capability.
- ◆ Expanded practitioner eligibility, including physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, and audiologists.

ADDITIONAL CMS POLICY CHANGES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2026

The 2026 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) final rule adds several permanent updates:

- ◆ Removal of visit frequency limits for inpatient, nursing facility, and critical care telehealth.
- ◆ Increase in the originating site facility fee to \$31.85.
- ◆ Virtual direct supervision, allowing real time audio/video to meet supervision requirements.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE PRESCRIBING

HHS and the DEA have extended pandemic era telemedicine prescribing flexibilities for controlled medications through December 31, 2026.

ADDITIONAL 2026 MEDICARE POLICY IMPACTS:

Budget Neutrality and Payment Pressures

Despite the APM bonus, many clinicians face ongoing financial strain due to:

- ◆ A continued 2% Medicare sequestration, and
- ◆ Budget neutrality adjustments within the PFS.

These combined factors may result in net negative payment impacts for some specialties.

Hospital at Home Extended

The **Acute Hospital Care at Home** program has been extended through **September 30, 2030**, supporting continued innovation in home based acute care delivery.

LTC ACO IN THE NEWS



Becker's 50 ACOs to Know | 2026

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REMINDERS & RESOURCES

Stay Connected with the LTC ACO Community Digest

The LTC ACO Community Digest is distributed regularly to share timely updates and reminders across the ACO. These emails highlight upcoming activities such as roundtables, office hours, educational sessions, and other important announcements to help practices stay informed and engaged.

If you or members of your team are not receiving these updates, please contact LTC ACO Communications at comms@ltcaco.com so we can ensure you are included in future distributions.

Orientation Hub

Our LTC ACO Partner Orientation Hub remains available as a centralized resource for practices and their team members joining the LTC ACO network. The hub includes key onboarding materials, guidance on operational processes, and helpful reference documents to support a smooth transition into the ACO.

Practice leaders are encouraged to share this resource with new team members who may benefit from a structured overview of LTC ACO programs and expectations.

Recent Session Replays

Watch the following replays on the [Clinical Resource Portal](#):

- ◆ **LTC ACO Office Hours: Predictive Analytics**
March 10 Replay
- ◆ **LTC ACO Clinical Roundtable**
February 25 Replay

SAVE *the* DATES

- ◆ **LTC ACO Office Hours: Quality Q&A | March 23, 2026**
- ◆ **PALTmed Annual Conference (PALTC26) | March 25-28**
- ◆ **Pharmacy Roundtable | April 29**
- ◆ **National Doctor's Day | March 30, 2026**

