

Change Plan Overview

Introduction to North Sound ACH

The North Sound Accountable Community of Health (North Sound ACH) is a nonprofit organization working with partners including eight tribes and organizations in Island, San Juan, Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom counties, to transform systems that impact health. Launched in 2014, and one of the first ACHs recognized in Washington, North Sound ACH is governed by a Board of Directors who set the strategic direction for the organization.

The North Sound ACH is also a partner in the statewide Healthier Washington initiative, which includes an agreement between Washington State and the federal government to support new and innovative approaches that will: 1) build healthier communities through a collaborative regional approach; 2) integrate the physical and behavioral health payment and delivery system to foster focus on the whole person; 3) prepare providers for contracts that pay for quality and outcomes rather than quantity; and 4) advance equity and reduce disparities. You can learn more about Healthier Washington at this link (<https://bit.ly/2xBa5M0>).

North Sound ACH is one of nine regional ACHs in Washington. During 2017, each ACH was required to select project focus areas within which initiatives would be planned and implemented. To date North Sound has close to 65 partners from clinical and community settings who have agreed to plan and carry out these projects. Washington's [Medicaid Transformation Project](#) presents an unprecedented opportunity for the North Sound region to advance a collaborative regional approach and portfolio of projects and strategies to build healthier communities. Our portfolio includes four initiatives: [Care Coordination](#), [Care Transformation](#), [Care Integration](#), and [Capacity Building](#).

What is a Change Plan?

The North Sound Change Plan is a tool that will document what you, as a North Sound ACH partner, want to accomplish to support Medicaid Transformation in our region. The success of the region depends on robust changes at the organization level that roll up to collective success for the North Sound region, and ultimately the state as a whole. Through completing this change plan, you are committing to radically improve our healthcare delivery system by:

- Adopting best-practice and evidence-base approaches
- Using quality improvement processes to inform your organization and improve health outcomes
- Linking to community-based social supports
- Actively working to advance equity and reduce health disparities in our region
- Moving forward with population health management systems and value-based payment

The North Sound ACH's Change Plan outlines 2019 milestones and worksteps for each strategy. The Change Plan is organized by initiative. In the Capacity Building Initiative all milestones and tactics are required. For each subsequent initiative, think about changes that would most benefit the patients or clients that you serve. Completion of the Change Plan can be a high level roadmap for your work. Beginning in 2019, partner organizations will be required to report progress on the items laid out in this Change Plan.

What am I being asked to do?

Partners have completed two steps so far:

- **Part 1:** an application that described the organization, its size, location and areas of interest, along with commitments to certain foundational activities.
- **Part 2:** a Partner Self-Assessment that offered deeper insights into the partner organization, workforce capacity, commitments to projects, its regional reach, and populations served.

This document describes **Part 3**, the final step of the application, the Change Plan. You are being asked to create your organization's Change Plan by reviewing this document and indicating in the Change Plan document which strategies your organization is committing to. The Change Plan is organized into two sections:

- **Section A: Capacity Building**
 - Required capacity building milestones and tactics
- **Section B: Cross-Cutting Implementation**
 - Required implementation milestones and tactics for each strategy selected
- **Section C: Initiative & Strategy Specific Implementation**
 - Required strategy-specific milestones and tactics for individual strategies selected

A + B + C = Change Plan

In completing the Change Plan, you will be asked to:

- Provide basic information about your organization
- Attest that you have reviewed and are agreeing to complete milestones and tactics contained within Sections A and B
- Select and commit to strategies, milestones and tactics for your organization outlined in Section C
- Submit an accompanying signature of an individual who can authorize and commit your organization, such as a CEO or Executive Director.

The Change Plan was designed to balance the level of detail required to describe implementation expectations with ease of use and completion for North Sound ACH partners. We hope the Change Plan facilitates the documentation of your organization's commitment. Remember this Change Plan is based on where you are today and will evolve as you progress.

What about target populations & performance metrics?

The North Sound ACH is committed to improving the lives of all people in the North Sound region. Within the Medicaid Transformation Project, we have prioritized the following target populations for initiatives and expect all North Sound ACH partners to focus implementation efforts toward individuals experiencing combinations of the following:

- Access, care and utilization disparities
- Co-occurring disorders/conditions (BH/SUD/PH)
- Pregnancy
- Serious mental illness
- Substance abuse, includes opioid abuse
- Abuse, trauma, adverse childhood experiences
- Arrested
- Chronic conditions
- High system utilization
- Homelessness

The Health Care Authority (HCA) has identified a variety of ways for ACH regions to earn dollars to share with partners. In the first two years it is heavily weighted to reporting on process and progress. Starting next year we begin to shift toward “pay for performance metrics.” These metrics are industry standards used to determine healthcare effectiveness, referred to as the healthcare effectiveness data and information set (HEDIS). Our continued success and funding is dependent upon our ability to realize improvements in these statewide metrics. With that said, no individual organization holds this responsibility of producing change at the population level by themselves. Our region’s success depends on robust changes within organizations that roll up to collective success at the regional level. North Sound ACH will routinely share performance data with partners so that as a region, our transformation work can be monitored. This will take many partners working to the best of their ability in order to see positive changes. [North Sound ACH’s Initiative Crosswalk with the HCA’s Pay for Performance Measures](#)

How do I submit a Change Plan and what if I have questions?

North Sound ACH is ready to assist you to successfully submit a Change Plan. We welcome your questions regarding the template and how best to complete it. Details regarding support and submission are as follows:

- Friday, October 5: Change plan is released to partners
- Friday, October 12, 10:00-11:00 am: Orientation & Informational call
- Thursday, October 18, 1:00-2:00 pm: Informational call
- Thursday, October 25, 10:00-11:00 am: Informational call
- Friday, November 2: Plans are due by EOB to hillary@northsoundach.org

All informational calls will be recorded and available to review later. Call-in info for the first call will be sent out Tuesday, October 9.

As soon as you complete your Change Plan you can submit it either in paper format or electronically to Hillary Thomsen at the North Sound ACH.

- By email to Hillary@NorthSoundACH.org
- By physical mail: North Sound ACH PO Box 4256 Bellingham, WA 98227
- In person: North Sound ACH 1204 Railroad Avenue, Suite 200 Bellingham, WA

For additional questions, contact Hillary at 360-543-8858 or Hillary@NorthSoundACH.org.

What will happen after I submit the Change Plan?

Once the Change Plans are received and reviewed, your organization will be contacted for a one-on-one meeting with the North Sound ACH team. We may have some questions for you, or you may have some for us. Your Change Plan is the final body of information that will shape the Scope of Work for your organization in the coming years of the Medicaid Transformation Project. You have already completed the Master Service Agreement (MSA) via the Financial Executor Portal, and the three parts of the application will form an addendum to that MSA. Before finalizing that addendum we want to meet with you and assure that we have heard and interpreted information in the way you intended.

If you need more information about North Sound ACH's Initiatives or strategies, the Medicaid Transformation Project Toolkit provides details about evidence-based approaches for each strategy.

<https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/program/project-toolkit-approved.pdf>

Thank you for engaging with us in this process.

The North Sound ACH Team

Frequently Asked Questions

Our staff is committed to offering support and being available to answer questions. Please continue to send questions to the team, and we will update FAQs on our website at this link:

http://www.northsoundach.org/2018_implementation_faqs/.

- **Why are partners asked to complete a Change Plan at the individual organizational level, when partnerships or collaboration are described as important or required in the Change Plan?**
 - Since the three parts of the application are components that form a contract addendum, it is important to have this information for each individual partner. At the same time, each partner is expected to work with other regional partners working together to transform the system.
 - The Change Plan demonstrates an organization's commitment to the strategies that will be reported in the coming year. The ACH will be monitoring that progress through reporting, site visits and meetings with provider teams.

- **How will the ACH facilitate collaboration across providers to support successful implementation activities?**
 - Once we have a chance to review responses to the Change Plan, the ACH team will bring partners together who seem to share a commitment to strategies or can mutually support each other's capacity to complete the goals outlined in the Change Plan.

- **What is the role of the anchor partners that were mentioned in the August Partner Retreat?**
 - We got a lot of great feedback on the concept of anchor organizations - some groups of partners have moved forward and formed their own teams - but we left the August retreat with the sense that it was a concept that shouldn't be forced or required. Instead we will support bringing together groups of partners based on the Change Plans and will facilitate conversation among partners as we review Change Plans and identify shared goals and commitments to implementation activity.

- **What about adding partners in 2019?**
 - This is a question we are grappling with during the fourth quarter of 2018. As we review the Change Plans, we may identify gaps where we made commitments to the Health Care Authority but don't have partners to implement those commitments. We don't think that is the case, but the Change Plans will answer those questions for us. We will determine whether we add partners, and if so, how and when, by end of the year.

- **What if I need to work with subcontractors to achieve my commitments?**
 - If your organization works with subcontractors to successfully complete work, the commitment is still yours. Unless that subcontractor is also an ACH partner, you will be held accountable for completing reporting requirements, attending trainings, and partner or ACH meetings. You have the responsibility to ensure the strategy is successfully implemented.

- **Has North Sound ACH already determined which of the projects each participating provider will participate in, or will the Change Plan impact that decision?**
 - North Sound ACH is not making any commitments on behalf of providers, nor assigning them to any body of work. The Change Plan will identify which projects your organization is committing to participating in. The ACH does not hold an expectation of which project any partner will commit to, beyond information you have shared in Part 1 and 2 of the application process. We expect that Change Plan commitments will represent your organization's practical, realistic capacity to implement strategies.

- **When should we expect to hear feedback from the ACH and will there be an opportunity to make any revisions to our Change Plan based on those discussions?**
 - The ACH will be reaching out to schedule one-on-one meetings with partners to review completed change plans in order to ensure we understand your commitments, as they form the basis of addendums to your Master Service Agreement. Those meetings will be scheduled and conducted between early November and late December of this year.

We have opened up blocks of time in November and December for those meetings. When you have completed and turned in your Change Plan, contact Hillary Thomsen to schedule your organization's one-on-one meeting: Hillary@NorthSoundACH.org

Glossary

Capacity Building: Strategies and tactics around leadership development, community capacity building, population health management systems; strategic and quality improvement; workforce development; value-based payment; Community HUB operations; training and education on equity and tribal issues.

Health Equity: Striving for the highest possible standard of health for all people regardless of social conditions, economy, demographics, or geography; giving priority and attention to the needs of those at greatest risk of poor health. Everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthier.

Health Information Exchange (HIE): Refers to the sharing of electronic health-related information in a manner that protects the confidentiality, privacy, and security of the information. This process requires use of national standards as they are established in order to increase interoperability, security and confidentiality of information.

Initiative: Four high level groupings of transformation activities: Care Coordination, Care Integration, Care Transformation, and Capacity Building.

Integrated care: Washington State generally defines integrated care as efforts to provide healthcare services that bring together all of the components that make humans healthy including the integration of mental health, substance abuse, and primary care services.

Milestones and Tactics: Minimum requirements for a strategy within the four initiatives. These may be tangible or intangible parts of the development process, and are specified functions or characteristics of the project.

Population health: In 2003, the American Journal of the Public Health Association defined population health as "the health outcomes of a group of individuals, including the distribution of such outcomes within the group." It is an approach to health that aims to improve the health of an entire human population.

Population Health Management Systems: Adoption of technology with the capability to support implementation of quality improvement processes; a plan to build enhancements in EHRs and other systems to support clinical decisions in accordance with guidelines; an assessment of the current level of use of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) and the Emergency Department Information Exchange; and strategies to increase use of PDMP and interoperability with EHRs. Overall...,develop a plan to use data and information to detect opioid misuse/abuse, monitor morbidity and mortality, and evaluate interventions.

Strategy: Specific areas of concentrated effort within each Initiative

Value Based Payment: A payment model that offers financial incentives to physicians, hospitals, medical groups, and other healthcare providers for meeting certain performance measures.

Additional Medicaid Transformation Resources:

<https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/healthier-washington/medicaid-transformation-resources>