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Blue Cross NC's Advanced Kidney Care Program Featured in National Case Study on Value-Based Specialty Care

Model improved clinical outcomes, reduced health care costs by \$81.5 million over 4 years

WASHINGTON D.C. (May 19, 2026) – [The Health Care Transformation Task Force](#) (Task Force) today released a new case study highlighting [Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina's](#) (Blue Cross NC's) Advanced Kidney Care (AKC) program, an outcomes-based model designed to improve care and affordability for people living with chronic kidney disease (CKD) and end stage renal disease (ESRD).

The publication, [Advancing Value-Based Specialty Integration Through Advanced Kidney Care](#), recognizes Blue Cross NC's leadership in integrating specialty care into broader value-based strategies through disciplined measurement, aligned incentives, and patient-centered design. The case study shows that the AKC program reduced health care costs by \$81.5 million over four years by reducing hospital admissions and avoiding emergency dialysis.

"Our Advanced Kidney Care program reflects how we are reimagining specialty care to better support people living with complex, chronic conditions," said Paul Hendley, AVP of Value Program Strategy and Operations at Blue Cross NC. "By partnering with high-performing providers and aligning incentives around outcomes, we can better support patients, improve health outcomes and help reduce overall health care costs."

Blue Cross NC's AKC program is designed to slow disease progression, improve quality of life, and reduce total cost of care by intervening before kidney failure occurs. Blue Cross NC rigorously selects providers to serve as an extension of the nephrologist and the broader care team by offering coordinated, patient-centered support that helps patients navigate care, manage comorbidities, and make informed decisions throughout the course of disease.

Supported by full risk-based financial arrangements, the program has contributed to fewer hospital admissions, fewer unplanned dialysis starts, and reductions in overall medical expense, demonstrating how deeply integrated specialty partnerships can improve outcomes for high-risk populations.

“Specialty care is a critical element of value-based transformation, so patients get the right care at the right time and achieve better outcomes,” said Theresa Dreyer, CEO of the Health Care Transformation Task Force. “This case study shows how integrating specialty providers into the broader care team—and aligning incentives around outcomes—can improve care and lower costs for people living with complex, chronic conditions like kidney disease.”

This publication is part of the Task Force’s ongoing series on value-based specialty integration. Additional case studies explore specialty payment and care models in areas such as oncology and cardiology, along with programs designed to support patients with complex needs. Learn more and access the series at <https://hcttf.org>.

ABOUT THE HEALTH CARE TRANSFORMATION TASK FORCE

The Health Care Transformation Task Force is a unique collaboration of patients, payers, providers, purchasers, and partners working to lead a sweeping transformation of the health care system. By transitioning to value-based models that support the Triple Aim of better health, better care, and lower costs, the Task Force is committed to accelerating the transformation to value in health care. To learn more, visit WWW.HCTTF.ORG.

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