

Built as a partnership between Molina Healthcare of California and Alzheimer's Greater Los Angeles (ALZGLA), the Dementia Cal MediConnect Project provides care for older adults with dementia and their families. They accomplish this by building on their individual strengths to educate and train staff and caregivers, integrate processes for seamless referrals and communication, and develop tools and resources. The program is equipping each of its staff to be more confident and prepared to provide care to individuals with dementia, resulting in higher quality of care and quality of life. The partnership strives to improve the system of care for people with dementia and their caregivers, meeting needs beyond medical care through community-based services and supports.

RESULTS

- Reduction in caregiver stress levels.
- Improved systems and processes for screening individuals' needs through the adoption of validated tools.
- Increased confidence for Molina care managers to refer individuals to necessary services.

INSPIRATION

Caregivers play an essential role in managing the health and well-being of individuals with dementia. They manage medication, schedule appointments, and address or arrange other care needs. Poorly coordinated health and community-based services complicate caregiver efforts and fail to provide the support these individuals require. Innovations in health care are putting a spotlight on the need to better coordinate care, including social services. Many new initiatives and models allow health payers to adopt new models of coordinated care, particularly for those living with dementia.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) Alzheimer's Disease Supportive Services Program created a grant program intended to develop a dementia-capable system of care for individuals with dementia in the Cal MediConnect initiative (California's dual eligible demonstration), which aims to better coordinate care for individuals eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. The California Department of Aging, received the grant for ACL, enabling ALZGLA to work with Molina Healthcare.

ALZGLA:

"Alzheimer's Greater Los Angeles' partnership with Molina shows how a national health plan can work with a local Alzheimer's community-based organization to make strategic and systematic changes to its system of care so it better serves the needs of families affected by dementia."

ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

ALZGLA and Molina Healthcare are the primary partners in this model. As part of the grant, they are engaging in shared learning, convening, and information-sharing with other organizations, including the California Department of Aging; the California Department of Health Care Services; the Institute for Health & Aging of University of California, San Francisco; and The John A. Hartford Foundation Change AGENTS Initiative Dementia Caregiving Network.

PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

The partnership is grant-supported; however, it does not require a formal agreement between the organizations involved. The partners have taken a collaborative approach to designing and implementing their partnership model, through consistent messaging and open communication.

MODEL DESIGN

The model has four key components: mutual education, care management training, technical assistance, and caregiver training and support. For mutual education, the partners have leveraged their individual skills by educating one another. For instance, ALZGLA taught Molina about the specific needs of individuals with dementia and their caregivers. Alternatively, Molina taught ALZGLA about their health care delivery system. The partners have also sought ways to disseminate their knowledge and experience to others by providing insights online or holding convenings for thought leaders.

ALZGLA has provided two levels of training to Molina staff, including training for Dementia Care Specialists (DCS). The training has covered areas such as screening processes, fundamentals of the disease, supportive care techniques, available resources and support services, and technical assistance with integrating tools and processes into Molina's care management system. In addition to initial training, ALZGLA provides frequent check-ins to care managers to reinforce training, address questions, and provide new tips. For the DCS training, ALZGLA has included valuable tools intended to prepare Molina staff to identify and support members with dementia and their caregivers.

Finally, the partnership model includes caregiver training and support. For example, Molina integrated the ALZ Direct Connect system into their operations, which is a direct referral system that allows for seamless referrals to ALZGLA to address needs. With this system, Molina has been able to easily connect individuals to support groups, counseling, and other services. ALZGLA also offers special caregiver training to Molina members that qualify.

FUNDING MECHANISM

The partnership is primarily funded by the grant from ACL. The funding does not pay directly for services, but it is used to educate caregivers, train staff, support families and implement technology systems and care processes.

LESSONS LEARNED

- There is high value in having shared goals and desiring the same outcomes.
- Partners must be accessible to each other for the purposes of open communication and growth.
- All partner perspectives should be considered, recognizing the benefit in incorporating each to identify a dementia-capable, model of coordinated care.

MOLINA HEALTHCARE:

"The impact of the above-mentioned results has also reached beyond our regional area. System changes adopted in this partnership will be integrated into our national medical care management system."

FUTURE

The partners intend to continue the development and growth of their partnership with additional tools and resources. The Ascertain Dementia 8-Item Informant Questionnaire (AD8), a cognitive screening tool, as well as a tool to test caregiver stress, are currently being implemented within the Molina clinical care management system to better identify and serve their members. They also seek to expand the partnership to Molina's other service areas within California by providing education and technical assistance.