Value-Based Payment to Support Children’s Health and Wellness: Shifting the Focus from Short-Term to Life Course Impact

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Value-based payment (VBP) models are being used to improve child health outcomes by incentivizing high-quality care. With 38% of U.S. children covered by Medicaid, states have an opportunity to implement VBP programs that could lead to long-term benefits and societal savings. Massachusetts’ Medicaid program, MassHealth, launched an accountable care organization in 2018 to serve both children and adults. A report by the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) examines Medicaid VBP models across states, highlighting key themes and policy considerations that can help Massachusetts—and other states—enhance child-focused VBP initiatives.

The report examines various VBP approaches across the United States that focus on pediatric care and identifies key themes for successful implementation. It also offers policy considerations to enhance Massachusetts' efforts in integrating children's health needs into its Medicaid Accountable Care Organization (ACO) Program. The findings aim to inform policymakers and stakeholders about adapting VBP models to better serve children, emphasizing that the goal should be to improve quality of care and support long-term health outcomes rather than focusing solely on short-term savings.

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