

An Evaluability Assessment of the Mississippi Delta Medicaid Population Health Demonstration Project

CONCLUSION: The Mississippi Delta Medicaid Population Health Demonstration Project, hereafter referred to as “the Project,” began in 2014 as a pilot project with Medicaid funding through the Division of Medicaid (DOM). It is administered by the Delta Health Alliance (DHA) and comprises two programs, the Delta Medicaid Prediabetes Program and the Healthy Pregnancy Program. As required in House Bill 1713, 2020 Regular Session, PEER sought to evaluate the services of DHA in administering the Project. PEER found that due to early operational delays, DHA expended funds for two years prior to any recruitment of program participants. Of the three registries developed by Cerner within the Project, only the Prediabetes registry has been utilized by DHA to provide a recruitment list for program participants. The Center for Community Research and Evaluation’s evaluation of the Project is insufficient to establish the effectiveness of the Project, based on documentation submitted to PEER. DHA has not tracked the extent to which participants have received similar services from a different source during the evaluation period.

Background:

During the 2014 Regular Session, the Legislature passed House Bill 1481 (DOM’s appropriation bill), which authorized DOM to allocate state general funds for the Project in FY 2015. DOM determined the Project’s two areas of focus would be reducing prediabetes and reducing preterm births.

On June 26, 2014, DOM issued a request for grant proposals. PEER identified several applicant requirements that could be considered restrictive, and given the resulting narrow scope, DHA submitted the only grant proposal. DOM awarded DHA the Project on July 14, 2014.

Organizations Involved in the Project:

Four primary organizations had a role in the project. Additionally, clinic providers entered into Memoranda of Agreements with DHA to provide electronic medical record data.

- Delta Health Alliance (DHA)
- Division of Medicaid (DOM)
- Cerner
- University of Memphis Center for Community Research and Evaluation
- Contracted Electronic Medical Record Providers

Delta Medicaid Prediabetes Program Participants Served from CY 2016 to CY 2021

Delta Medicaid Prediabetes Program	Year of Program Enrollment (CY)						Total	Percent
	2016 ¹	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 ²		
Participants who completed the program	28	10	68	201	180	0	487	40.0%
Participants actively enrolled in the program as of June 23, 2021	0	0	0	0	94	168	262	21.5%
Participants who did NOT complete the program	47	17	83	239	69	14	469	38.5%
Total individuals enrolled in the program (first enrollment only)	75	27	151	440	343	182	1,218	100.0%

- 1) Beginning August 15, 2016.
2) Through June 23, 2021.

Healthy Pregnancy Program Participants Served from CY 2017 to CY 2021

Healthy Pregnancy Program (mothers)	Year of Program Enrollment (CY)					Total	Percent
	2017 ¹	2018	2019	2020	2021 ²		
Participants who completed the program	5	73	193	143	3	417	39.5%
Participants actively enrolled in the program as of June 23, 2021	0	0	0	68	192	260	24.7%
Participants who did NOT complete the program	82	80	137	70	9	378	35.8%
Total individuals enrolled in the program (first enrollment only)	87	153	330	281	204	1,055	100.0%

- 1) Beginning January 18, 2017.
2) Through June 23, 2021.

Mississippi Delta Medicaid Population Health Demonstration Project Funding and Expenditures, FY 2015 to FY 2021

Fiscal Year	Funding (\$)	Expenditures (\$)
2015	2,165,297	1,349,253
2016	1,963,161	1,111,341
2017	1,948,535	1,483,615
2018	1,664,593	3,528,657
2019	2,879,051	3,185,223
2020	3,661,095	2,198,747
2021	4,161,095	3,675,942
Project Total	\$18,442,827	\$16,532,778

Timeline of Project Approval and Provision of Programmatic Services

Early operational delays in launching the Project resulted in a two-year time frame between when DOM first awarded DHA the grant for the Project and when DHA first started recruiting participants for the Delta Medicaid Prediabetes Program. As a result, DHA expended state funds for two years in an effort to launch the Project.

Participant Recruitment and Enrollment Challenges

Although Cerner developed three registries, only the Prediabetes Registry has been utilized for its intended purpose: to identify a recruitment list for DHA. DHA reported it does not use the Preterm Birth Registry to identify participants to participate in the Healthy Pregnancy Program. Because data from the Preterm Birth Registry is not timely, programmatic needs necessitate that DHA conduct its own recruitment process to find participants.

Center for Community Research and Evaluation's Efforts to Evaluate the Project

The Center for Community Research and Evaluation's evaluation of the Project is insufficient to establish the effectiveness of the Project, based on documentation submitted to PEER. Primarily, the Center for Community Research and Evaluation is unable to document the Project's research plan/methodology.

What is the Future of the Project?

During the 2021 Legislative Session, the Legislature passed House Bill 1400 (i.e., DOM's appropriation bill). H.B. 1400 significantly reduced the funding allocated to DHA for the Project from \$4,161,095 in FY 2021 to \$1,000,000 in FY 2022. Given this reduction in funding, DHA reported it has taken actions "in order to have an orderly shutdown of the project" and continue serving existing patients.

Recommendations

1. DOM should report to the Legislature (e. g., Chairmen of the Senate and House Public Health Committees, Medicaid Committees, and Appropriations Committees) by December 31, 2021, alternatives for how DOM would utilize such funding if not allocated to the Project and the reasons why.
2. In order for PEER to evaluate the Project's evaluability in future years, DHA should implement the following steps:
 - a. Develop a documented research methodology for how the program is evaluated;
 - b. Develop performance measures, as required by the Legislature, including not only identifying outcome measures in which to report on the Project but identifying what levels are to be achieved. Additional performance measures might include but are not limited to:
 - i. Number of participants completing each program each year;
 - ii. Program completion rate; and,
 - iii. Program non-completion rate.
 - c. Document Project performance. This includes source data, metrics, and dates in Project evaluations.
3. The Legislature should require DOM to oversee the Project and report its findings in conjunction with DHA's annual progress report. This includes:
 - a. assessing the efficacy of such performance metrics established by DHA;
 - b. monitoring the Project's process toward achieving established performance metrics;
 - c. evaluating DHA's compliance with developing a documented written methodology in which to evaluate and assess the Project's performance;
 - d. determining, in conjunction with DHA, the extent of program overlap/service overlap with other state-funded programs; and,
 - e. establishing and enforcing oversight mechanisms on holding DHA accountable (e.g., authority to assess liquidated damages).