



A single community hospital in Kansas looked to strategically align with its local FQHC in order to improve patient outcomes and reduce costs of care in a non-Medicaid expansion state.



CASE STUDY

FQHC AFFILIATION STRATEGY

THE CHALLENGE

A community hospital in Kansas entered the planning stages of a new state-of-the-art recovery campus and sought to align and strengthen the community's behavioral health ecosystem to ensure that it would be positioned to succeed given the multiple entities involved. At the same time, the hospital had a new opportunity to collaborate on care of the underserved in partnership with a local Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that recently experienced a major organizational overhaul. The two entities were aligned in the need to partner but were very siloed with differing visions of how and to what degree they could align. The hospital sought our support to develop an FQHC affiliation model that would optimize care and reimbursement for Medicaid patients and the uninsured.

OUR APPROACH

Health Ecosystem

The Initium team conducted a series of interviews with hospital and FQHC stakeholders, analyzed financial and operational data, and reviewed successful hospital-FQHC partnerships in similar markets across the country. We paid particular attention to improving health information transfer so that patients could be cared for more effectively and efficiently. We examined scheduling challenges at the FQHC and made recommendations to generate additional capacity. We also established workflows to shift patients who presented in the hospital ER with low-acuity issues to the FQHC, aligning care coordination resources to ensure effective transitions of care.

Our team developed a shared framework for joint population health management strategies, along with an assessment of technological solutions, with an emphasis on supporting new care pathways and alignment options within the market. By examining each area of care delivery, we made recommendations for identified priority areas that were directly tied to key indicators of success.

OUR RESULTS

Aligned Incentives

- Established plans for an in-house retail pharmacy at the FQHC to capitalize on its 340B drug discount program participation, a solution that was mutually beneficial for both organizations.
- Developed strategy to optimize care delivery for Medicaid-covered and uninsured individuals while reducing overall healthcare costs by transferring select clinics from the hospital to the FQHC.
- Advanced the organization’s strategic alignment through board-level collaboration, joint strategic planning, and a memorandum of understanding to formally agree on the details of a mutually beneficial plan.
- Provided a roadmap to align ER behavioral health care with multiple community-based providers, including plans to advance communication and coordination and reduce ER visits.

HEALTH INFORMATION TRANSFER: THE PRIMARY CHALLENGE TO CARE COORDINATION

