The **Accountable Health Communities (AHC) Model** addressed a critical gap between clinical care and community services in the health care delivery system. The model tested whether systematically identifying and addressing the health-related social needs (HRSN) of Medicare, Medicaid, and dual-eligible patients through screening, referral, and community navigation services would impact health care costs and reduce health care utilization.

All awardees screened community-dwelling patients to identify certain unmet HRSNs. **Assistance Track** awardees provided navigation services to high-risk patients, defined as those with one or more of the five core HRSNs and two or more emergency department (ED) visits in the 12 months before screening. **Alignment Track** awardees provided navigation services to high-risk patients and encouraged partner alignment to improve availability of community services in response to reported needs.

### AHC Model Awardees

The findings in this document are based on data from the 31 awardees that implemented the AHC Model. These awardees served patients in 22 states including both rural areas and 7 of the 10 largest U.S. cities. Awardees represented a diverse group of organizations, including:

- Hospitals, health systems, and health care organizations (22)
- Community-based or social service organizations (2)
- Health plans (2)
- University or research organizations (2)
- Health information exchanges (2)
- Local health department (1)

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1 These findings report HRSN screenings and navigation cases for the 31 awardees that implemented the model from 2017 through 2023. Three awardees withdrew from the model before it ended.

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Preliminary findings and figures are based on program monitoring data from the Accountable Health Communities (AHC) Model. This report is independent from the official AHC Model evaluation and is for informational purposes only. While the official AHC Model evaluation will use the same program data, continued data cleaning and analysis may result in slightly different results. For more information visit: [https://www.cms.gov/priorities/innovation/innovation-models/AHCM](https://www.cms.gov/priorities/innovation/innovation-models/AHCM)
Screening for Health-Related Social Needs

AHC awardees used the **AHC HRSN Screening Tool** to identify whether patients were experiencing one or more HRSNs, including the five core HRSNs:

- Housing instability
- Transportation problems
- Food insecurity
- Utility difficulties
- Interpersonal violence (safety)

Of the 1.1 million patients who completed nearly 2 million screenings:

- Reported having at least one core HRSN: 36%
- Reported two or more core HRSNs: 19%

Of those patients who completed a screening and whose coverage status could be verified:

- Medicaid: 57%
- Medicare: 29%
- Dual-Eligible: 14%

Food was the most common need among all screened patients, followed by housing

Among all patients who completed an HRSN screening, food insecurity was the most common need identified. Specifically, 23% of patients who completed a screening reported a food need.

Of those patients who completed a screening:

- Food: 23%
- Housing: 17%
- Transportation: 14%
- Utilities: 11%
- Safety: 2%

Most awardees employed community health workers to conduct at least some HRSN screening or navigation

Most awardees used a combination of existing staff in clinical sites and newly hired screening staff to conduct screenings. Community health workers were the most common type of staff for both screening and navigation.

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Accountable Health Communities Model

Community Navigation Services
Awardees offered navigation services to community-dwelling patients who met the following criteria: identified one or more core HRSNs, and had two or more ED visits in the last year. To connect patients to community services, AHC navigators conducted an in-depth interview with each patient and created a patientized action plan to help resolve their reported needs.

Eligibility
- About 1.1 million patients completed an HRSN screening.
- Of the patients who completed a screening, 36% reported one or more HRSNs.
- 15% of the patients who completed a screening met the eligibility criteria for navigation services.

Accepting Navigation Services
Medicaid patients represented a majority of those who accepted navigation services.

Most Navigation Cases Addressed
Food Insecurity and Nearly Half Addressed Housing Instability
After a patient accepted assistance, the navigator opened a navigation case. The navigator then worked with the patient to connect to community services to address each HRSN. Navigation cases were often complex, and 61% of cases involved multiple needs. Nearly two thirds of all cases addressed food insecurity, the most common HRSN in navigation cases.

Resolving Health-Related Social Needs
AHC navigators followed up with patients receiving navigation services until the patient reported their needs were resolved or until the remaining HRSNs were documented as unresolvable. To fully address patients’ complex needs, they were eligible to receive navigation services for one year. In more than one third of navigation cases that listed a final status for each HRSN, patients reported that at least one core HRSN was resolved. Awardees encountered many challenges in resolving their patients’ HRSNs including difficulty reaching patients and limited capacity among community service providers that were not directly funded by the AHC Model.

Navigation services helped resolve at least one HRSN in about one-third of cases

Most Commonly Reported Reasons
- At least one HRSN resolved 34%
- Unable to reach patient 27%
- Community service unavailable 9%
- Declined further assistance 6%
- Connected to a community service for at least one HRSN 5%
- Multiple unresolved reasons 2%
- Unknown 17%

4 These percentages are among patients who completed screening and whose coverage status could be verified.

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