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The Blueprint for Value-Based Growth

What the most future ready behavioral health organizations are doing differently

Innovation as a Strategy

A healthcare case study on innovation and differentiation

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The Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) program represents one of the most evidence-based, outcomes-driven models in behavioral health today. While this paper draws lessons from CCBHCs, its insights extend well beyond organizations pursuing or operating under the CCBHC designation. Reporting on the value of services, using data to demonstrate outcomes, and aligning strategy with sustainable funding models are practices that help *any innovative human services organization grow*, regardless of structure or certification status.

The lessons that follow are drawn from organizations that are operating at the forefront of integrated, value-based care.

Who Should Read This

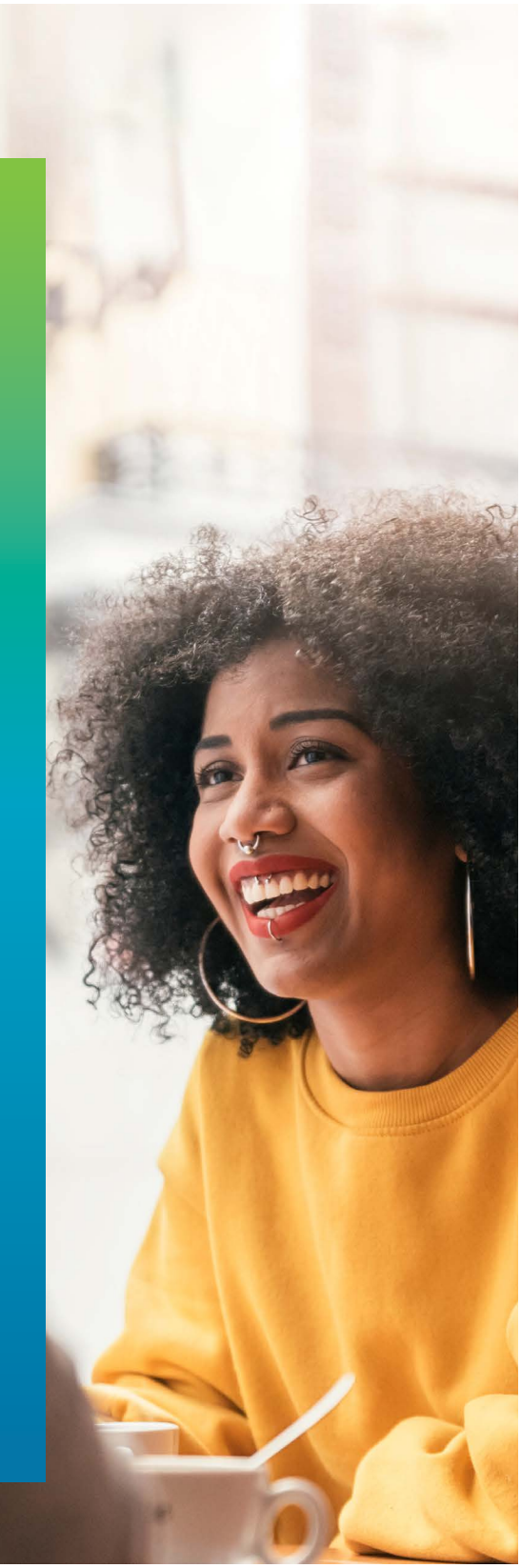
Innovators

Your organization may not be a CCBHC now (or ever) but if you're focused on innovation, growth and long-term sustainability, the CCBHC model offers practical insights into how to operationalize outcomes, leverage data as a strategic asset and prove the value of care delivery. The strategies outlined in this paper apply to organizations preparing for more rigorous reporting, stronger payer accountability and increased expectations around whole-person care.

CCBHCs

For existing CCBHCs, whether preparing for certification or continuing to strengthen your model, this paper brings together real-world perspectives from peer leaders who are navigating the same challenges. From infrastructure and data strategy to partnerships and payment models, the lessons shared here reflect what high-performing CCBHCs are doing to scale impact, sustain performance and lead the future of behavioral health.

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Introduction: Why CCBHCs Matter

Chronic illnesses are driving the growth of healthcare spending in the United States. When a consumer has co-morbid mental health and substance use diagnoses alongside an underlying chronic disease, their cost of care is 200% to 400% more expensive than a consumer without those co-morbidities. Too often, care is considered complete when the current problem is alleviated. This episodic approach to care becomes cyclical due to the nature of chronic disease, which is detrimental to the dual goals of improving health and reducing costs.

On the other hand, an increased focus on population health management, the evolution of clinical standards and advances in interoperability are driving opportunities—and the imperative—for integrated, collaborative care.

CCBHCs provide an integrated model of care that represents a significant step forward in improving outcomes, aligning provider payment with outcomes and recovery, and decreasing the cost of care. CCBHCs are an outcomes-focused, integrated care model centered on community-based, whole-person care.

More than 500 CCBHCs are in operation across the country, expanding and coordinating care across physical health, mental health addiction treatment and social services. CCBHCs are required to integrate behavioral health, physical health and social services organizations into their care model and programs—and provide the care coordination to manage all these services for the people they serve.

What's just as compelling as the CCBHC model itself is how leading organizations are executing it. Across the country, CCBHCs—and organizations operating like them—are building the strategy, infrastructure and data capabilities required to succeed under value-based care. The following insights are drawn directly from real-world leaders who are putting the CCBHC blueprint into action.

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Strategy Before Scale

> By putting metrics in place and holding themselves accountable, the team discovered where their problems were—and took the first step toward providing value-based care.

Innovation is more than just the latest technology—it's about how leaders navigate a changing market. We asked a panel of behavioral health executives to share their "C-suite blueprint" for success: What specific strategies are they using to ensure financial health while expanding access to care.

When discussing innovation, the conversation quickly turned to strategy. As one leader noted, nonprofit organizations are starting to consolidate and merge, while private equity is investing heavily in for-profit community mental health centers. These organizations measure outcomes, capture data and use it to validate the services they provide.

"You know, what we do is clinical service delivery," said Fabio Van Der Merwe, CEO of DeKalb Community Service Board. "But what we produce is data. That's actually our product."

Kristen Daugherty, CEO of Emergence Health Network, echoed this sentiment when reflecting on the early days of her leadership. "We had to figure out where to start," she recalled. "I think that's where most organizations struggle. There's so much you want to do."

With the help of consultants, Kristen and her team grouped their goals into three-year increments and started internally. Emergence lacked infrastructure, communications, outcomes tracking and revenue diversification.

Strategic Takeaway

High performing CCBHCs treat strategy as a discipline. Multiyear planning, leadership alignment and clear prioritization are foundational to succeeding under value-based care and meeting rigorous CCBHC reporting and performance requirements.



Data as a Business Asset

For Fabio, CCBHCs go back to the idea of data and value-based care. Profitability is tied to population health management and other data-driven programs that "marry the clinical side to the financial side," he said. Under a value-based care model, success depends on access to data—and the ability to use it. Numbers tell the story in a way that guarantees (or denies) an organization's potential for growth.

"At the end of the day, it's not just about having the data to report," Kristen explained.

> "It's about knowing what to do with the data, the ability to interpret the data and how the data can translate into revenue under a value-based care system."

At Emergence, data from all sources is aggregated into dashboards that show state-mandated outcomes. These dashboards are accessible across the organization, including to providers, who appreciate that reporting doesn't take time away from delivering care.

From a broader industry perspective, data has become a differentiator. Venture capitalists and payers alike rely on outcomes data to validate services, manage population health and justify reimbursement models. As Fabio points out, we should use our data as a way to gain more evidence and better outcomes.

Strategic Takeaway

Data is the bridge between clinical excellence and financial stability. By operationalizing data as a dual-purpose asset, CCBHCs move beyond simple compliance to secure the PPS funding needed to scale their mission and meet the complex needs of the populations they serve

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Value-Based Care, Operationalized

Value-based care starts with meeting people's needs—but it also requires organizations to prove they are making a difference. For CCBHCs, this accountability is built into the model.

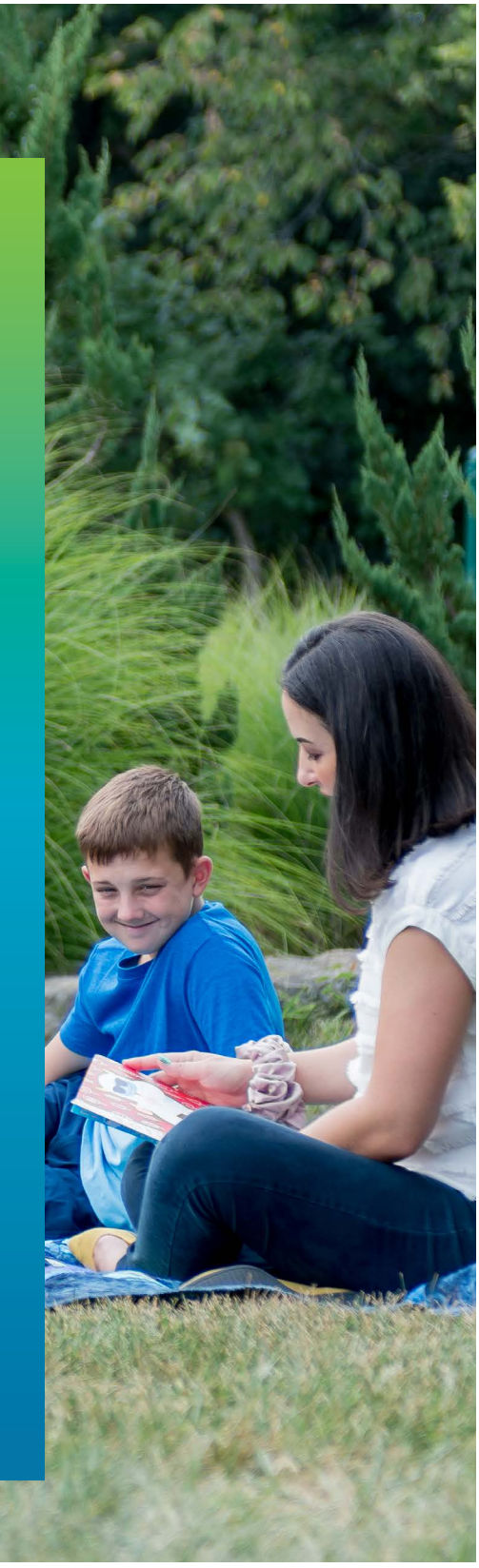
Certified community behavioral health clinics are reimbursed based on their anticipated costs of offering comprehensive services, which improves everything else in the organization. Profitability becomes tied to population health management, outcomes tracking and the ability to marry the clinical side to the financial side of the business.

> It's about how you can impact lives and how you can impact the cost," Kristen said. "Those are the two things you have to be able to bring together."

By embedding value-based care into workflows, culture and reporting structures, organizations like Emergence have moved beyond compliance to create sustainable growth and measurable impact.

Strategic Takeaway

CCBHCs don't just talk about value-based care; they prove it. By turning raw data into required outcomes and population health metrics, these clinics move beyond the abstract and deliver a measurable standard of accountability



Partnership-Driven Growth and Agility

In an increasingly complex healthcare landscape, agility matters. For many organizations, that agility comes from partnerships. Jason Chippeaux, CEO of Health Solutions in Colorado, explains “We think a lot about infrastructure, being agile, flexible, and fast,” he said. “And, because of our size, we think about partnerships.”

“We’re roughly a fifty-million-dollar organization,” Jason said. “So, we don’t have a ton of muscle. But we can be agile. We can get to an opportunity maybe quicker than a larger system.”

One strategy to consider is the three Ps: positioning, posture and partnerships. In other words, position yourself front and center when it comes to service line development. Set yourself up with the right posture, or infrastructure allowing your organization to remain agile enough to pivot and be in the right place. Finally, align your organization with the right partners that create synergy and momentum to move forward.

Kristen sees everyone as a partner, including payers. Emergence has built relationships with schools, emergency services and community organizations, using shared data and coordinated workflows to extend care beyond the four walls of the clinic.

Teaming up with the right partners can help leverage more scale than you have. While size doesn’t necessarily equal success, it can help create a company that’s responsive to whatever the environment brings.

Strategic Takeaway

Success in the CCBHC model is built on seamless collaboration across schools, crisis systems, and payers. By establishing formal Designated Collaborating Organization (DCO) agreements, clinics can extend their reach through community partners, using a unified data foundation to coordinate care and close the loop on every referral.

Infrastructure as a Strategic Advantage

All these pillars—data, CCBHCs, partnerships— rest on a single foundation: infrastructure. From data aggregation and predictive analytics to interoperability and population health management, industry leaders agree that success in value-based care depends on having the right tools in place.

When Kristen inherited a struggling organization, she faced a decision: operate on a skeleton budget or invest in the future. Emergence chose to invest. The organization invested millions of dollars in technology, including both hardware and software, with an electronic health record (EHR) at its core.

Kristen and her team constructed a high functioning digital infrastructure that allowed them to automate reporting, collect data and support strategic decision making. The technology investment wasn't just about compliance—it was about enabling the organization to execute its long-term strategy.

> "It's not about the size of your organization," one panelist noted. "It's about the scope of your vision."

Strategic Takeaway

CCBHC status doesn't just demand better infrastructure; it rewards it. By leaning into interoperability and population health tools, organizations move beyond basic compliance and turn their technology into an engine for high-performance care.



CCBHCs as the Blueprint for the Future

Healthcare continues to embrace a whole-person care approach with a focus on population health management, and CCBHCs play an integral role in this shift. Behavioral health is uniquely positioned to drive this transition because of its dual focus on behavioral and physical health and its experience managing both episodic and longitudinal care.

Embracing the opportunity to expand access to services and quarterback integration with primary care and community partners is key to ensuring an organization's ability to continue improving care and quality of life in the communities it serves.

CCBHCs are not just a funding model, they are the clearest blueprint for how human services organizations can thrive in a value-based future.

About Netsmart

Netsmart is a leading provider of healthcare technology solutions purpose-built for public sector and human services organizations. Our CareFabric® platform supports integrated care delivery across physical, behavioral, and social services. With over 55 years of experience and more than 165 million lives impacted, we help human services organizations transform data into action.

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