

## Initiating Communication and Building Relationships with Prospective Partners

Once you've identified health care organizations (HCOs) that you might partner with, how do you start communication and build relationships with them? Here are some strategies that can help.

### Focus on your shared mission

Focus your mission and the shared strategic vision that brought you and your prospective partner together.<sup>1,2</sup>



### Communicate the benefits for them

Community-based organizations (CBOs) need to show HCOs “what’s in it for them.” CBOs can benefit HCOs in many ways. Will your services help them to become part of new models of care? Improve health, improve quality of life, or meet people’s unmet needs? Increase their competitiveness for funding? Provide more integrated services? Serve more people? Develop public support for their issue or influence policy? Increase cost-efficiency? Save health care costs?

### Use their language

Use the language of your prospective HCO partner. If they are seeking to become part of a new model of care, such as a medical home or accountable care organization, use the terms of that care model to describe your organization’s strengths (e.g. “serving people with chronic conditions”).<sup>3</sup>

### Demonstrate your value with data

CBOs need to develop a business case to justify the investment of their services in the partnership.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, you should identify specific services where you have the greatest competitive advantage, and determine what outcomes are most important to the HCO. Collect qualitative and quantitative data to illustrate those outcomes.<sup>5</sup> Show that the value the HCO will gain will outweigh the cost they pay for your services.

### Show the supporting research

Past studies can help you to show the benefits of integrating the types of services your organization provides into healthcare.<sup>5</sup> Useful resources for finding this research include the AHRQ’s Patient-Centered Medical Home Resource Center (<https://pcmh.ahrq.gov/>) and the National Academy for State Health Policy’s Health Reform Implementation Library (<https://www.statereforum.org/resources>).

### Be persistent

Sometimes, engaging HCOs in communication can take persistence. Expect some setbacks and use them as learning opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

*Prepared by: Meaningful Evidence, LLC for NMAC’s Capacity Building Division*

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