The Healthcare Playbook for Making MIPS a Change Enabler
Introduction

MIPS is more than just a compliance program for Medicare. It’s a change-enabler for value-based care. Healthcare organizations and medical groups of all sizes that embrace this idea are experiencing meaningful improvements in quality measurement and earning top scores as a result. Most importantly, these organizations are establishing credibility with their clinicians that quality payment programs can be effectively managed to deliver intrinsic and financial value.

We outline 7-ways to make MIPS a change-enabler through field experiences from health systems and medical groups that work with SA Ignite to manage their MIPS performance. These organizations are among the highest achievers in the MIPS program, averaging MIPS scores of 95 for the 2017 performance year. They are establishing healthy business practices for quality management using data and insights from IgniteMIPS to create relevancy and establish credibility with their clinicians.
Collaborate Internally and Externally

Change doesn’t happen by decree or through participation in a single value-based care program. It happens over time through incremental wins and team collaboration.

* Create internal cross functional teams to define your priorities, redefine workflows and facilitate forward progress. The ideal team includes individuals responsible for monitoring quality and performance improvement + a physician champion or clinical leadership.

* Collaborate to define performance goals and objectives that make sense for the organization for MIPS and broader quality programs. Share results, discuss workflows and identify new areas of focus.

* United Health Services keeps momentum going in their value-based care programs with monthly and quarterly meetings with specific goals and objectives. There is ongoing dialog with administrative staff to identify gaps and what resources they may need.

Engage with your community of peers who face the same challenges.

* Learn from peers by participating in support groups and forums to share knowledge and best practices. United Health Services and Christie Clinic participate in a quarterly SA Ignite support group to discuss challenges, successes and best practices with MIPS and quality program management.

“Having access to the brain trust at SA Ignite helps us to determine what direction our group needs to go and we rely heavily on them.”

— Ron Rockwood, EHR Coordinator, Jefferson City Medical Group (JCMG)
"Get your data challenges out of the way first so you can tell if you need to address a workflow or a data problem, versus a physician performance problem. You can more effectively close gaps when you have visibility into the data on a regular basis."
— Christie Clinic and Jefferson City Medical Group

2 Define Workflows and Data-Capture Strategy

Data can be everywhere in your EHR. In some cases, the data needed to demonstrate compliance with a measure may not be tracked in the EHR or perhaps there are multiple EHRs to manage.

* Examine current workflows in the EHR and gain agreement on the best option that ensures consistent data capture with minimal disruption. In some cases, you may want to examine the possibility of re-assigning tasks to clinical staff.

* Christie Clinic engaged clinicians and staff early in the process to understand workflow impacts. They re-assigned some tasks to alleviate the burden on providers and to integrate staff into the success of the program.

Establish consistency in data tracking, management and workflow in the EHR(s).

* Christie Clinic and Jefferson City Medical Group agree, “Get your data challenges out of the way first so you can tell if you need to address a workflow or a data problem, versus a physician performance problem. You can more effectively close gaps when you have visibility into the data on a regular basis.”
Jefferson City Medical Group got off to a strong start in MIPS by using their success in PQRS to inform their priorities for MIPS. With this strategy, the team was also able to reduce the stress of moving from one program to another.

Many healthcare organizations are participating in 10+ value-based care programs. CMS designed MIPS and other of its payment programs (ACOs, CPC+, Medicare Advantage) to overlap in the measures they’re tracking.

* Use MIPS as a foundation to operationalize clinical workflows more in line with a broader value-based payment structure.

* Christie Clinic, a Track I ACO is using MIPS to show clinicians the up-side financial impact of actively tracking and managing performance improvement in value-based care programs and has gained momentum as a result.

MIPS brought together three distinct CMS programs — Meaningful Use, PQRS and the Value Modifier to reduce complexity for providers and to drive forward momentum on healthcare reform.

* Build on the successes from existing and previous payment programs to move your organization to the next stage of value-based care. Jefferson City Medical Group got off to a strong start in MIPS by using their success in PQRS to inform their priorities for MIPS. With this strategy, the team was also able to reduce the stress of moving from one program to another.
To maintain excellent performance as value-based care models increase in risk and competitiveness, you need ongoing insights to navigate the ups and downs that occur among individual clinicians and measures.

* Not all measures are created equal due to the variation of benchmarks. Clinicians can earn maximum points without completing a measure 100%. On the other hand, some measures are topped out, which means even if your organization achieves a 99%, you may only earn 7 points for that measure.

* Jefferson City Medical Group added 6 additional high-priority measures to actively manage for performance and have more options at submission time.

Be sure to strike a balance between your performance initiatives and your fee-for-service (FFS) revenue. Create targeted initiatives on specific measures that not only yield a big upside potential, but also align with your organizational goals.

* Christie Clinic gained momentum for its quality programs organization-wide when the team identified ways to implement a limited number of programs in the clinic with careful consideration about administrative burden on providers.
Relevant and timely reports are critical to creating momentum among clinicians for MIPS and other value-based care initiatives. Reports must be tailored to the individual or group and show performance on things that matter. 

* Jefferson City Medical Group used MIPS as the impetus to create monthly reports and dashboards so providers can see their individual contribution, performance and scores.

**Showing the impact MIPS can have on overall quality improvement also helps to establish the program as a change-enabler.**

* There is universal agreement that showing physicians and clinical staff why you’re focusing on specific initiatives or workflows goes a long way to changing the mindset from resistance to constructive engagement.

**Reports can illuminate inaccuracies or inconsistencies in the data and can be used to highlight opportunities for workflow improvement.**

* Christie Clinic created a reporting package to manage performance on the Falls Risk Screening, a high impact measure for MIPS. The reports revealed gaps in workflow and performance. The team redesigned the workflow to capture data more consistently, trained staff and worked with individual clinicians to address shortcomings in performance. Dashboards now provide details on a near real time basis, showing the percentage of times workflow is followed.

“Using SA Ignite, we were able to identify the biggest opportunity to increase our score, re-assess our workflows and re-train staff. We gained 2.2 MIPS points in 6 months and can monitor improvement daily.”

— Collin Roloff, Analytics Manager, Christie Clinic.
Foster Competition and Reward Good Behavior

You can’t improve what you can’t measure, and there’s nothing like a little competition to spur action. Physicians are naturally competitive and respond to a public challenge.

- Quality program managers and clinical leadership universally agree that recognizing top performers spurs the competitive spirit and gets results.
- One clinical leader from a urology practice in North Carolina shared an anecdote about three clinicians at the bottom of the rankings for a measure. After posting rankings on the staff bulletin board, these clinicians changed their behavior and rose to the top in a matter of 10 days.

Identify top performers and find out what’s working for them. Publicly recognize top performers and apply their practices to others in the group.

- Identifying trends in measures and individual clinician performance is exceptionally helpful in focusing performance improvement efforts and minimizing distractions. Quality program managers agree that identifying high performers and understanding what’s working is a big help when retraining staff.
Be flexible on the level of information you give to providers. Respect their limitations in time and interest in understanding the ins and outs of MIPS.

- Providers are the change agents. Quality program managers are the subject matter experts. United Health Services gives providers information in digestible amounts to improve awareness and mitigate negative distractions.

- Keep communication lines open with providers and deliver the message using a variety of methods, including messaging in EHR, email, lunch-and-learns.

When it comes to workflow and data capture, you will have to train, validate, train, validate. By keeping communication lines open and reviewing individual measure trend data, you can detect workflow and training issues much more quickly and tailor communication to those that need an extra push.

- For Christie Clinic, BMI follow-up was documented in 3 to 4 different places in the EHR. Only 1 place was being mapped for MIPS and the ACO, which led the team to retrain staff to ensure the right field in the EHR was being used.
MIPS can be a change-enabler for value-based care in your organization with cross-functional collaboration and access to data and insights that help fine tune your strategy. Change does not happen overnight. It doesn’t happen by decree or fiat. It happens by fostering incremental reform, modeling success and addressing gaps in a focused and constructive manner.

SA Ignite customers consistently achieve top scores in MIPS using our IgniteMIPS solution and engaging with our regulatory experts for timely and relevant guidance.

Contact us to learn how we can help you make MIPS a change-enabler for your organization at 312-724-7700 or info@saignite.com.