Frequently Asked Questions about ACC Project Design

Introduction	*The Virginia Center for Health Innovation (VCHI) was recently awarded a Round 2 State Innovation Models (SIM) Design Grant from the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The creation of Accountable Care Communities is the core strategy of Virginia's SIM Design Award. An Accountable Care Community (ACC) is a community in which multiple stakeholders work collaboratively to advance the Triple Aim (better care, better health, and lower cost) in their regions, and to share the responsibility for the health of the community. This outline provides a set of suggested guidelines for designing ACC Projects that could be developed as part of the ACC strategy.* [1]
What is an ACC Project?	An ACC Project is a collaborative project developed at the community level and designed to advance the Triple Aim of better health, better care, and lower costs for a defined population. • Virginia's strategic approach is to generate multiple ACC Projects within each ACC region, with an eye toward expanding or replicating projects that work. • ACC Projects may be large or small in terms of the size of the population served and the scope of geography included. Smaller projects should be designed with potential for scale or replication in mind.
What are some potential sources of funding for ACC Projects?	VCHI is currently working with a wide range of Virginia partners to develop a menu of funding models that could support ACC Projects. More information on funding options will be provided later in 2015. Options under review include: • Federal grant funding • Foundation grant funding • Medicaid DSRIP funding (Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment) • Other payment reform models from health plans, Medicaid, Medicare, and employer-based plans.
What are the expectations for ACC Project design in 2015?	During 2015 VCHI is asking community stakeholders to consider developing ACC Project ideas that could be implemented (with an appropriate funding model) in 2016. • Communities are encouraged to begin thinking about ACC Project ideas now so that we will have projects ready to go if funding opportunities emerge in the coming months. • The expectation is to have a design concept for one or more ACC Projects by the end of 2015 for potential funding in 2016. By a design concept we mean a brief concept proposal that identifies the high-level who, what, where, when, and how, of a project. • It will not be necessary to have a detailed project proposal (although the latter could certainly be valuable!). We realize that the details will depend in part on the funding model. '
How can we get started with ACC Project design?	One way to get started is to convene a group of people to talk about community health needs, existing community projects, and opportunities for ACC Project development. • Data on community health needs can be obtained from the Virginia Atlas of Community Health and additional sources that are linked to the Atlas. (www.AtlasVa.org) • Simply getting people together is a good way to start identifying existing community projects, with the idea that an existing project could be a good candidate for expansion or replication as an ACC Project. • If there are population health needs that require a brand new project approach, you can start collaborating to develop the design concept.
What health coverage groups could be involved in an ACC Project?	An ACC Project could potentially involve multiple health coverage groups, with Medicaid and Medicare as priorities for federal funding streams that flow from CMS. Populations in other health categories may be included as well, including: • Medicaid • Exchange plans • Medicare • Military Health • Dual Eligible Medicare / Medicaid • Uninsured • Employer-based plans

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[1] Learn more about Accountable Care Communities from the Virginia Center for Health Innovation http://www.vahealthinnovation.org/what-we-do/the-virginia-health-innovation-plan/regional-accountable-care-communities-information/

What populations could be served by ACC Projects?	The SIM Design Grant is focused on improving the Triple Aim (better health, better care, lower cost) for defined populations. Possible focal points include populations who need: • Management of high risk pregnancy and birth outcomes • Management of chronic disease • Management of complex conditions through integrated care (medical care, behavioral health care, oral health care, community supports) • Health promotion and prevention to reduce high risk and chronic conditions • Focused supports to address social determinants of health or health disparities disparities.
What types of partners could be involved in an ACC Project?	An ACC Project could (and should) involve multiple partners, such as: • Clinical practices (behavioral health, dental care, medical care) • Community health centers • Community services boards • Free and charitable clinics • Employers • Health philanthropy • Health plans • Home health providers • Hospitals and health systems • Local Government • Pharmacy providers • Public health agencies • Social service agencies • Community development agencies • Other community-based organizations that support health and health care
What types of care delivery models could be employed in an ACC Project?	A wide range of design models have been used to produce effective community health improvement projects in Virginia and across the country. As you consider your ACC Project, remember that there are established care models that you can draw from including: • High Risk Pregnancy Models • Patient Centered Primary Care Models • Chronic Care Models • Integrated Care Models (e.g. medical, behavioral, and oral health) • Care Transitions Models • Clinical-community Partnership Models • Telehealth models • Community development models that address social determinants of health • Other models that respond to population needs.
What types of outcomes should ACC Projects aim for?	ACC Projects should be designed to achieve 'triple aim' outcomes related to better health, better care, and lower costs. This is especially important for projects that could be funded with federal dollars for Medicaid or Medicare populations. Example outcomes could include: • High standards in quality of care • Reductions in potentially preventable hospital ED visits, admissions, and readmissions • Improvements in self management of health conditions • Improvements in health promotion and prevention • Improvements in access to behavioral and oral healthcare through improved integration of care. • Reductions in health disparities • Reductions in per capita costs of care.
What types of ACC Project design supports are available?	The Virginia SIM Design Grant has a team of people who are ready to assist community stakeholders in designing ACC Project ideas. Resources include research, data, tools, training, and technical assistance for project design. You can contact the support team through the Virginia Center for Health Innovation[2] or the Virginia Atlas of Community Health (www.AtlasVa.org)

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[2] http://www.vahealthinnovation.org/what-we-do/the-virginia-health-innovation-plan/regional-accountable-care-communities-information/