

Beneficiary and physician focus groups

ISSUE: Each year, the Commission conducts focus groups in markets around the country in order to provide a qualitative description of beneficiary and physician experiences with the Medicare program. In addition to the focus groups, we conduct site visits to providers within each market. The focus groups and site visits provide real-time impressions of how the Medicare program is working, from the perspectives of Medicare beneficiaries and providers participating in the program.

KEY POINTS: This presentation reviews the main findings from the most recent round of focus groups. In 2014, we conducted a total of 18 focus groups in three markets. We held focus groups with Medicare beneficiaries, near beneficiaries (non-Medicare eligible individuals between the ages of 55 and 64), primary care physicians, and nurse practitioners. To supplement the focus groups, we visited 13 sites across the markets, mostly health systems, accountable care organizations (ACOs), and State Health Insurance Assistance Program offices. Topics included access to primary and specialty care, organization and coordination of care (including patient-centered medical homes and ACOs), and how beneficiaries approach their choice of fee-for-service or managed care.

ACTION: Commissioners will discuss the main findings.

STAFF CONTACT: Christine Aguiar and Joan Sokolovsky