



## Investing in Care Management Brings Shared Savings, Improved Care Quality

Stonecreek Family Physicians earned shared savings and reduced emergency department utilization by 17 percent after launching a dedicated care management program.

**Stonecreek Family Physicians, LLP  
Manhattan, Kansas**

### CHALLENGE

At Stonecreek Family Physicians, a rocky EHR replacement, skepticism about value-based care, and prior disappointments with participation in an accountable care organization (ACO) could have forced this 10-physician practice to close its doors. But strong commitment from staff members, a willingness to invest in new ideas, and partnering with Aledade brought a new focus on care management as a way to boost care quality and earn shared savings that kept this family practice afloat.

**“Working with a partner helps us make sure that we’re not spending time reinventing the wheel, and that we can learn from other practices just like us who have done this well. If you can pair that with the willingness to make an upfront investment in care coordination, and if you believe in the model, then your time and effort are going to pay off.”**



—Dr. Knopp

While some providers may feel wary about shouldering the up-front costs of adding staff, Stonecreek physician Dr. Ryan Knopp encourages practices to make these necessary investments to reap greater rewards down the line.

“You’re going to need to invest something up front. Part of that is going to be time, commitment, and creativity— but part of that is going to be upfront costs for hiring your care coordinators and other tangible spending,” observed Knopp.

“You have to believe that there will be return on that investment. When you hear a patient say that they really appreciate a call after they went to the ED, that they were so pleased that you know and care about their health, that’s an amazing return on investment. That’s our number-one motivator.”

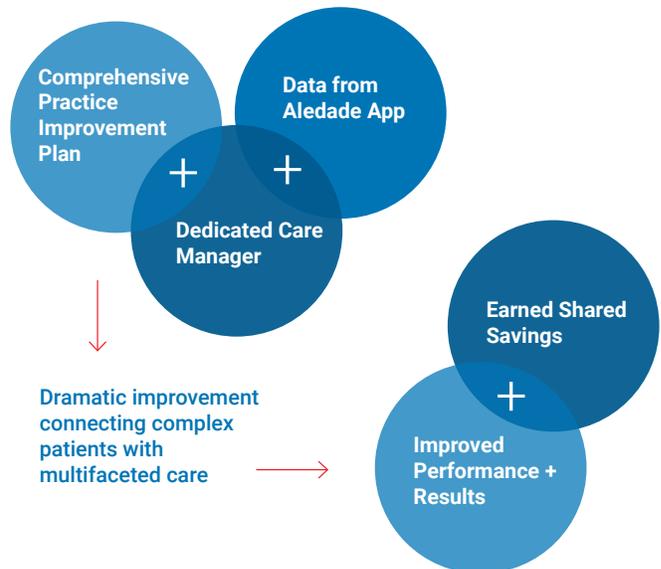
When Stonecreek hired its first care manager—a registered nurse with a background in social work—the practice was able to combine Aledade’s data with real-world clinical experience, dramatically improving the ability to connect complex patients with the multifaceted care they need.

### SOLUTION

While their previous ACO offered little data or actionable advice, Stonecreek Family Physicians took advantage of Aledade’s robust app and comprehensive plan for practice improvement, creating more financial stability for the business.

The Aledade app allows Stonecreek Family Physicians to identify their patients in need of care management. Data from the app indicated that enhancing the chronic care management program could improve performance and results.

With support and guidance from Aledade, practice leaders at Stonecreek decided to hire a dedicated care manager to spearhead the expanded programming.





All day, every day we work with patients with chronic conditions who are in need of chronic care management,” said Marian Darnell, RN, Stonecreek’s care management leader. “Care coordination must invest in creating smooth collaborative relationships with resources outside their practice so patients can get support that will make it more likely for them to remain compliant and see improvements.”

“We do find that patients become more engaged after we start working with them, even if we just let them know that we’re available if they need us. We’ll give them a phone number to call, and it can really turn opinions around when they get an answer and get help quickly after calling us.”

Stonecreek quickly added more members to its care management team, helping the practice reduce emergency department visits, improve quality of life for patients, and earn shared savings in its 1-year commercial contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas in performance year 2017.

“Value-based care definitely requires a culture change, both for your practice and your patients,” said Knopp. “We’ve focused on communication to foster that culture change. We do a lot of talking about the reasoning behind process changes, and we try to put everything in the context of why it’s good for patients, good for our office, and good for the healthcare system as a whole.”

Now that care management has become “the new normal” for Stonecreek Family Physicians, the practice is aiming to add even more care management positions to further enhance its ability to deliver coordinated, high-quality care to patients.

## RESULTS

- From Q1 2017 to Q4 2018, there was a 17 percent decrease in ED visits per 1,000 patients
- From Q1 2017 to Q4 2018 there was a 24 percent decrease in 30-day all-cause ED recurrence per 1,000 discharges
- In performance year 2017, Stonecreek Family Physicians earned shared savings in its 1-year commercial contract with BCBS of Kansas
- The practice is currently on track to earn shared savings from BCBS of Kansas and Medicare for performance year 2018

## PATIENT CASE-STUDY

“Steve” has diabetes, paraplegia, and debilitating decubitus ulcers. He had to leave his job, which was his only source of income and benefits, as well as his social network and lifeline to others. When CCM began to work with him, he was difficult to engage either verbally or emotionally. We were able, over time, to assist him in getting health insurance, disability income, and a needed surgery for his ulcers.

After lengthy rehab, he returned to his home with a sense of renewed hope, and began to verbalize change talk about his plans and desires. He’s looking for gainful employment again, he is involved in his church and volunteering, and he readily smiles and engages in conversation.



For more information about value-based care visit [aledade.com](http://aledade.com).