

## **Wellforce Announces State Certification for New ACO Program**

*The Health Policy Commission's First-in-the-Nation Program Aims to Improve Health and Lower Costs through High-Quality, Coordinated Care*

**BOSTON- January 4, 2018** – Wellforce today announced that the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission (HPC) has certified it as an Accountable Care Organization (ACO) in its new, first-in-the-nation program. The HPC's first round of ACO Certification includes 17 HPC-certified ACOs and is a significant milestone for Massachusetts, making it the first state to implement state-wide, all-payer standards for care delivery.

The HPC's ACO Certification Program is closely aligned with efforts by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Office of MassHealth to improve health and reduce health care cost growth in the Commonwealth through ACOs. The goal is a health care delivery system that delivers coordinated, patient-centered health care that accounts for patients' behavioral, social, and medical needs.

“The ACO program represents a significant change in the way MassHealth contracts with health care organizations throughout the state,” said **Massachusetts Secretary for Health and Human Services, Marylou Sudders**. “The goal of the ACO program is to improve the care coordination and health outcomes for 850,000 MassHealth members and we are pleased they all met the thorough certification standards.”

For the first year of the program, the HPC defined a set of criteria on which to assess ACOs for certification against that goal. However, unlike other state or federal programs, the HPC's certification program evaluates ACOs on an all-payer basis, including for their Medicaid, Medicare, and commercially-insured patient populations.

The HPC-certified ACOs include a diverse cross-section of 17 health care organizations from across the Commonwealth. Importantly, the HPC will certify all organizations participating in the MassHealth ACO program.

“The ACO Certification Program will bring new transparency and information to the public regarding how ACOs are structured and operating today,” said **David Seltz, HPC Executive Director**. “The HPC expects to analyze the information received and identify best practices and areas of improvement for payers, policy-makers, researchers, providers, and consumers.”

In order to be evaluated for certification, organizations were required to provide information for 15 standards, including patient-centered governance, performance improvement strategy, experience in quality-based risk contracts, population health management programs, and ability to coordinate cross-continuum care. Full certification is effective for two years and organizations with provisional certification must apply for full certification within one year.

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The Massachusetts Health Policy Commission (HPC) is an independent state agency that develops policy to reduce health care cost growth and improve the quality of patient care. The HPC's mission is to advance a more transparent,

accountable, and innovative health care system through its independent policy leadership and investment programs. The HPC's goal is better health and better care – at a lower cost – across the Commonwealth.