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#VegasStrong

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## THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES...

Silver State ACO's first full year of operations was in 2014. Over the ten years since, SSACO has worked hard to benefit all involved – providers, staff, and especially, beneficiaries. In the process, we are proud to say that we have saved Medicare over \$232,500,000. We have been successful for eight consecutive years, earning more than \$137,000,000 in Shared Savings. Above all, we have helped improve patient experience and outcomes, also substantially reducing readmissions.

We are fully aware of all the hard work that everyone contributed to make this happen. We want to take this



opportunity to **THANK YOU!** Each person adds his/her specific talent to the mix, making it possible. We appreciate you all and wish you a very Happy New Year, filled with good health, warm family time, wonderful relationships, and a peaceful world.

Thank you, again. On to a great 2024. **Cheers!**



## WELCOME NEW PARTICIPANTS

CMS created Accountable Care Organizations as a means to allow doctors and health professions to work together to provide more coordinated care. This includes allowing them to share patient information and, as such, ACOs are very carefully monitored and strictly overseen by CMS. ACOs are allowed to add or drop practices only once per year.

Silver State ACO is very proud of its ability to bring practices together, to work toward the common good for its beneficiaries. We work with our Participant practices over the course of the entire year. We research and study which protocols or workflows are most effective, hoping to share the information with other Participants,

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First Practice Meetings for 2024:  
*Southern Nevada*  
*Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024*

*Northern Nevada:*  
*Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024*

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thereby benefitting all practices, their patients and the ACO as a whole. Each summer, we carefully review selected practices to ensure that their focus and goals are in line with ours. Only then are they invited to join Silver State ACO for the following performance year, beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>.

We are excited to welcome four new practices to Silver State ACO. Two are located in Southern Nevada and two in Northern Nevada, continuing SSACO’s expansion to all parts of the state. Please welcome the new SSACO Participants, effective January 1, 2024:

**Center for Health Internal Medicine**

Reno

**Daulat Medical Center**

Las Vegas

**Ralston Medical, Ltd.**

Reno

**Southern Nevada Family Medicine**

North Las Vegas

In 2024, Silver State is comprised of fifty four practices, representing nearly 900 providers.



**QUALITY MEASURES SPOTLIGHT**

**Preventive Care: Influenza Immunization**

With the increase of flu and RSV cases, we want to take this opportunity to remind our practices about the documentation specifications needed to meet the Influenza Immunization measure that The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requires Silver State ACO to report on behalf of our Participant practices.

The influenza virus causes 31.4 million outpatient visits each year and accrues over \$10.4 billion in direct medical expenses. Patients who are 65 years and older are at a greater risk of developing serious complications such as pneumonia, bronchitis, heart problems and worsening chronic conditions.



**SPOTLIGHT**

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During the 2017-2018 flu season, it was reported that **70%** of hospitalizations and **58%** of deaths relating to the flu virus occurred in adults 65 years and older.

As with previous years, CMS requires patients 6 months and older to receive an influenza immunization each flu season.



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the vaccine may not be 100% effective against the virus, however studies have shown that patients who receive the vaccine are 60% less likely to be infected and, if they are, experience a reduction in the severity of symptoms.

The flu season is defined each year as between the months of **August - March**

Documentation of an influenza vaccine **must** include **BOTH** the month and the year the immunization was administered. Receipt of an influenza vaccine may be self-reported by the patient and can be documented during a telehealth visit.

If the patient reports receiving an influenza vaccine from another provider during the flu season (months listed above), the practice must document that in the patient chart even if the practice did not administer the vaccination.

CMS will make exceptions for this measure, but these **must** be documented in a dated encounter during each flu season (months listed above). The most common exceptions are:

- Patient allergy
- Patient had a prior adverse reaction
- Other medical reason that the patient cannot receive the immunization
- Patient refuses the immunization



If you have any questions about exceptions for the measure or if you are having trouble meeting this measure, please reach out to your Quality Coordinator.

### SHARING THE JOY

The Board of Directors of Silver State ACO is tasked with the overall responsibility for all aspects of Silver State ACO actions. They consider how best to benefit the beneficiaries as well as the providers and practices.

The Board acknowledges the hard work and effort exerted by all involved in order to achieve outstanding results and is grateful to all who contribute to the success of the ACO. As in years past, the Board

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has announced its intention to share with those less fortunate, setting aside funds for charitable donations.

The Board has specified that donations benefit those in the state of Nevada. Each of the recommended charities is highly rated and carefully vetted. The first of the donations was delivered last month.



Larry Preston, CEO of Silver State ACO, presenting a \$5,000 check to Heather Hadfield, Development Officer at ThreeSquare, an organization dedicated to ending hunger in our community.

### HIPAA HERE, HIPAA THERE, WATCH HIPAA EVERYWHERE

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is a federal law that required the creation of national standards to protect sensitive patient health information from being disclosed without the patient's consent or knowledge. It includes the requirement that the Secretary of The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) publicize standards for the electronic exchange, privacy and security of health information. HHS issued the HIPAA Privacy Rule to implement the requirements of HIPAA. The HIPAA Security Rule ensures that electronic health data is appropriately secured.



Over the years, changes and clarifications have been added. On December 6, 2023, HHS published updated HIPAA Security Rules, to be effective January 1, 2024. The new updates include greater enforcement and accountability; higher civil penalties; and new cybersecurity requirements.

The update was published in reaction to the increase in cybersecurity attacks and HIPAA violations. One new focus relates to authentication of those requesting PHI (protected health information) and warns against the use of a four or five character



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password which does not adequately protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of ePHI.

For more information, please visit:

<https://aspr.hhs.gov/cyber/Documents/Health-Care-Sector-Cybersecurity-Dec2023-508.pdf>

and view:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnbBxxyZLc8>

Silver State ACO reminds all to review the new HIPAA and compliance rules, to stay up to date on the guidelines and to reinforce education of staff.

**PRACTICE MEETINGS REMINDER:** In the December newsletter, the 2024 practice meeting schedule was announced. Please be sure to note your calendars:

**SOUTHERN NEVADA**

*Wednesday, February 7, 2024*

*Wednesday, May 1, 2024*

*Wednesday, July 31, 2024*

*Wednesday, November 6, 2024*

All Southern Nevada Practice meetings will be held at Summerlin Hospital and begin at 11:30 a.m. Lunch will be served.

**NORTHERN NEVADA**

*Thursday, February 8, 2023*

*Thursday, May 2, 2024*

*Thursday, August 1, 2024*

*Thursday, November 7, 2024*

All Northern Nevada Practice Meetings will be held at Northern Nevada Sparks Medical Building, Suite 201. Meet & Greet begins at 5 pm; Meeting begins at 5:30.



**REMINDERS**

- Start the year right – review access to all systems / portals which contain PHI. Be sure that only those who need access have it. Consider requiring that all passwords be changed for added security. Never write down passwords where others can access them!
- Participants are encouraged to refer to the **Silver State ACO Preferred Provider Network** list when referring patients to a specialist. These providers, outstanding in their respective field, deliver excellent care while minimizing redundancy and unnecessary procedures.



Preferred Provider Network		Southern Nevada	Northern Nevada
<b>Acute Care Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-798-6200	702-798-6200
<b>Advanced Imaging Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Behavioral Health Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Cardiovascular Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Chiropractic Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Diagnostic Imaging Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Emergency Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Home Health Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Immunization Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Intensive Care Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Lab Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Maternity Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Medical Oncology Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Neurology Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Orthopedic Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Outpatient Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Physical Therapy Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Podiatry Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Preventive Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Primary Care Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Specialty Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Urgent Care Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>Wound Care Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300
<b>X-ray Services</b>	702-880-0300	702-880-0300	702-880-0300

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• [www.SilverStateACO.com](http://www.SilverStateACO.com) is the official website of Silver State ACO. There is a wealth of knowledge, including detailed information about many of the programs and protocols implemented by SSACO. We encourage our Participant to use it as a resource.

- **DispatchHealth** is the Silver State ACO preferred provider for in-home care. Dispatch can perform many of the services available in the ED, but in the comfort of a patient’s home.

There is a dedicated phone number for SSACO beneficiaries: **725-246-1973**, giving patients access to in-home care even more quickly. DispatchHealth will send a full report of the visit, with documentation, to the patient’s PCP.

The best way to be sure that your patients know about this service is for *you to tell them*.

DispatchHealth has flyers and cards that can easily be distributed in your waiting or exam rooms. This service benefits your patients as well as SSACO. An in-home visit is both more convenient and less expensive than a visit to the ED. Please be sure to let your patients know about this service, available to them using their Medicare benefits.



- **Comagine Health**, a Quality Improvement Organization working with CMS, has introduced a new Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Screening and Management Learning Collaborative. Their aim is to have primary care providers join the initiative to improve early detection of CKD before it progresses to end-stage renal disease (ESRD).

Quest Diagnostics is working alongside Comagine Health to compile data from in-office lab testing to simplify processes for CKD screening in patients with diabetes and hypertension, who are at high-risk.

Participant practices are urged to reach out to Comagine to discuss the possibility and value of joining the program. Email [partnership@comagine.org](mailto:partnership@comagine.org) to apply for this program. Space is limited and available slots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. For additional information, reach out directly to Dr. Bard Coats at [bcoats@comagine.org](mailto:bcoats@comagine.org) with any questions.

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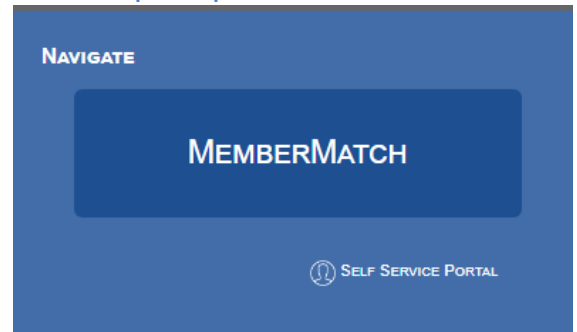
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- The **Experian Health MemberMatch** program, developed in conjunction with SSACO, notifies Participant practices when a patient has been discharged from the hospital (inpatient or OBS). Knowing this, the practice can reach out to the patient for follow-up. And, if certain simple guidelines are adhered to, the practice may bill CMS for a Transitional Care Management (TCM) visit, which pays extremely well. CMS has made the guidelines easy and pays well for the visit because it understands the great benefit of a patient seeing his/her PCP as soon as possible after discharge, including a reduction in the likelihood of a readmission.



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Available for secure reporting of any suspected compliance issues, without fear of retribution.



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