

Trump Administration Will Launch New Specialty-Payment Models

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Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar

The Trump administration plans to launch new payment and service delivery models for cardiac care and radiation oncology, and is looking at expanding models to other clinical areas, according to an announcement by the Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar.

“Real experimentation with episodic bundles requires a willingness to try mandatory models,” Azar said at a Patient-Centered Primary Care Collaborative conference in Washington. “We’re not going to stop there: We will use all avenues available to us—including mandatory and voluntary episode-based payment models.”

More Action in Coming Months

Mandatory payment models require participation by certain Medicare providers, as opposed to joining those payment systems voluntarily. Azar has previously said mandatory payment models result in better data on the success of the models.

The administration has been using alternative payment models, a type of payment system where providers earn rewards for delivering high quality and cost-efficient care in exchange for taking on risk, to advance their value-based care agenda.

Both Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Seema Verma and Medicare Innovation Director Adam Boehler have previously indicated that the agency [plans to take more action](#) on payment models in the coming months.

The administration had initially planned to launch an episode-payment model for cardiac care in January 2018, but scrapped the program in November 2018. Azar said the administration stepped back on that so it could reexamine the role of the models in moving toward value-based care.

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