Anchor questions for CMS on Regional Learning Collaborative Plan

ANCHOR COMMENT/QUESTIONS RELATED TO LEARNING COLLABORATIVE AND APPENDIX A:

Q: CMS has indicated that RHP 17 must submit a revised learning collaborative plan to CMS outlining a learning collaborative to the level of detail in Appendix A of the RHP Planning Protocol. During the original planning stages, questions were posed related to these learning collaboratives during some of the anchor calls and it was indicated that these could be general in nature as the state was seeking input from CMS on some of the guidelines in Appendix A and the state was still developing what the statewide learning collaborative would look like. In addition, we used up our entire page allotment in Sections I-IV of the plan. We are happy to draft and submit a more detailed learning collaborative plan; however, some of the questions/issues raised with the Appendix A guidelines are as follows – mostly related to the intent as it relates to a regional collaborative:

1. How does the RHP (namely, the Anchor) review and respond (testing new solutions and ideas) to data every week? A regional learning collaborative, even with breakout groups, will be very wide spread and we are not sure what the intent of testing new solutions every week is at the regional level? How does the anchor implement this and ensure it is being done?

2. Holding a biweekly call or webinar is not a problem. However, performing providers who are implementing wide arrays of projects and working to institute projects have expressed concerns about being required to test a new idea each week throughout the life of the waiver.

3. Who in the RHP is expected to set these quantifiable, project-level goals related to outcomes? The Anchor is not the technical expert and is not deemed appropriate to set or enforce project-level goals on the Performing Providers when they are the subject-matter experts in their areas of work. Can these goals be the same as their outcome measures since they will be actively managing toward those goals over the course of the work and those goals would have been chosen by the providers?

4. What is the intent of investing in the learning by getting out into the field and supporting learning? Is the Anchor expected to perform site visits? Or are performing providers expected to visit each other's facilities to exchange ideas at the "front line"?

5. What kind of/where do you find portals that are designed for improvement work and allow you to rent space? What does this website look like if it is rented space not managed by the Anchor team or participating providers? Is this expense reimbursable under the 50/50 administrative match? If we already work on an established network with internal IT support and are maintaining an 1115 website for dissemination of information, why can we not create a page or portal on our own website from scratch to support a regional learning collaborative?

6. What kind of measurement systems are intended here, and who sets the parameters for the measurement? The providers who are self-reporting?

7. Are these "regional innovators" intended to be employees of the Anchor for a regional learning collaborative? Or the performing providers? Or both? Are you able to use existing employees? Or is the intent here to hire someone dedicated to this alone –and, if so, who covers this additional expense? How is the travel reimbursed, especially in wide-spread rural regions? What skill level or training do they need to be able to answer questions about implementation of ideas for various project improvements? Is the State organizing this initial training in improvement tools and skills, and will the state provide periodic continuing education? When will that take place so regional collaboratives can start to be implemented?
8. Setting up face-to-face meetings quarterly or semi-annually is not a problem.
9. Not sure how success should be celebrated, but question here would be can it be celebrated biweekly instead of weekly if calls are set for biweekly intervals?
10. Who is mandating improvements and how are they determined? Is the Anchor supposed to as the organizer of the collaborative? Or are these collaboratives intended to be a majority vote type structure or have a steering committee, etc., that would suggest and mandate improvements? The concern, again, is related to the Anchor not being the subject-matter experts in the projects implemented by performing providers in the region. Also, what happens when you have projects that no one else in a region is doing but one provider?
11. How are some of these metrics (like questions per day) being tracked? Is that the intent of the website?