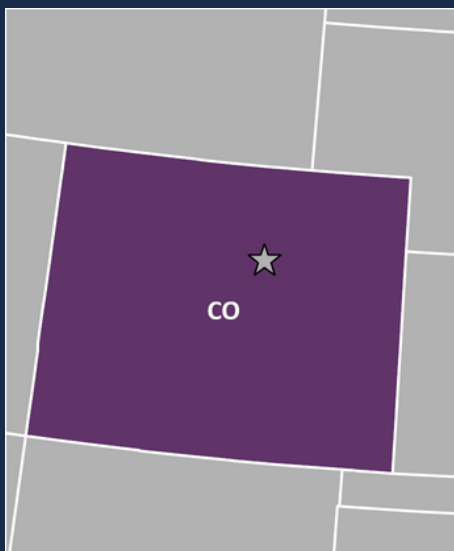# AHRQ Long COVID Care Network

Novel Statewide Response to Post-COVID Care Delivery

Institution

University of Colorado, Denver
National Jewish Health
Family Health West

Geographic Service Area

Colorado

Priority Population

Underserved and rural populations

Project Period

2023–2028

Contact

Principal Investigators

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Project Overview

The University of Colorado, Denver, established the Colorado Multidisciplinary Translation Network (CO-MTN), which comprises three multidisciplinary Long COVID clinics (MDCs) and 30 primary care clinics (PCCs) working together within a tiered delivery care structure. The three MDCs are located at the University of Colorado Hospital, National Jewish Health, and Family Health West. The 30 PCCs are part of the State of Colorado Network of Ambulatory Practices and Partners, which encompasses 280 primary care practices serving diverse populations across Colorado. CO-MTN represents an integrated, three-tiered care delivery model for Long COVID care, linking PCCs to MDCs.

Clinicians at the three MDCs specialize in pulmonary medicine, cardiology, physical medicine and rehabilitation, integrative/primary care, psychiatry, and infectious diseases. Additionally, advanced practice providers, rehabilitation specialists, and care navigators contribute to patient care.

Through the AHRQ Long COVID Care Network, CO-MTN aims to streamline the care process for patients across Colorado, particularly those from underserved communities, and to enhance intervention uptake by establishing evidence-based best practices in MDCs that will be shared with community-based PCCs.

Notable Features

- A **CO-MTN Community Engagement and Patient Advisory Panel** was established with 10 members who have lived experience with Long COVID or are caregivers. This panel meets quarterly to share insights on patient experiences and care access. It also helps ensure culturally responsive care by raising awareness of relevant issues and improving training and practice to address barriers and spread best practices.

- CO-MTN is utilizing **telehealth services** to increase access and dissemination of Long COVID care to priority populations.

Specific Aims

The University of Colorado aims to (1) implement an integrated, tiered care delivery pathway with facilitated implementation support via CO-MTN and measure its effect on reach of Long COVID care to Colorado patients, specifically underserved populations, and effectiveness in reducing Long COVID symptom burden and severity for patients; and 2) determine the effect of CO-MTN on adoption of the CO-MTN tiered care delivery pathway by PCCs and primary care providers within these clinics, implementation of the tiered care pathway, and maintenance of the tiered care pathway key components past the active project period.

Empowering Clinicians Through Targeted Education

To implement the CO-MTN tiered approach, MDC clinicians are delivering targeted training on Long COVID identification and management to primary care clinicians. This training includes both in-person sessions and telementoring through ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes), which provides disease-specific education and interactive, case-based learning linked with MDC expertise. Members of the Community Engagement and Patient Advisory Panel will also participate in these ECHO sessions, sharing their lived experiences with Long COVID to inform clinicians. Additionally, primary care clinicians will engage in a virtual ECHO-based learning community focused on Long COVID to exchange best practices and address challenges. MDC clinicians will offer further clinician coaching to help solve ongoing care issues. The effectiveness of the targeted education and training will be evaluated through clinician surveys to gauge satisfaction and past practices, as well as ECHO assessments to measure knowledge, capacity, and self-efficacy.
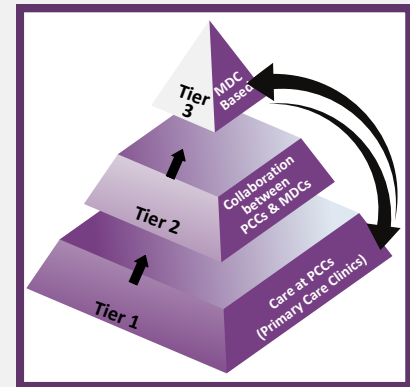
CO-MTN: A Novel, Streamlined Approach to Long COVID Care

CO-MTN is a tiered model of Long COVID care delivery that triages patients based on their symptoms. Tier 1 involves care at PCCs, supported by targeted provider training on Long COVID and practice aids in PCC workflows. Tier 2 includes collaboration between PCCs and MDCs, utilizing e-consultations to enhance the care provided at PCCs. Tier 3 involves transferring patients with severe Long COVID symptoms from PCCs to MDCs for specialized care.

To facilitate this system, certified health navigators will be embedded within the MDC teams to assist with care coordination, improve communication between PCCs and MDCs, and connect patients with community resources.

The aim is to develop a sustainable Long COVID care model that can be implemented across the state and potentially serve as a model for other regions. The effectiveness of the CO-MTN model will be assessed by reviewing medical records and conducting surveys and interviews with patients.

By the Numbers

- **32** physicians and staff across the three MDCs treat patients
- All MDCs are part of larger healthcare systems servicing **18** hospital facilities across the state
- All **3** MDCs have translation services, telehealth and e-consultation capabilities, and are in a rural catchment area

"Although up to 600,000 Coloradans are experiencing Long COVID, less than 10,000 patients have seen trained specialists dedicated to providing best-practice care for Long COVID. To address these issues, CO-MTN will provide a necessary coordination and collaborative bridge between MDCs and PCCs while advancing the science of translation and progressing our understanding of how tiered care with additional supports can support Long COVID recovery."

- Sarah Jolley, Principal Investigator

AHRQ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality