

Comprehensive primary care promises to transform the U.S. health care system by unlocking powerful health improvements and cost savings for patients and taxpayers. By investing in primary care, lawmakers can improve the health and wellbeing of all Americans.

The Promise of Primary Care

Research has consistently shown that primary care is the foundation of a strong, effective health care system – providing better access to health services, improved outcomes and lower mortality rates.^{1,2}

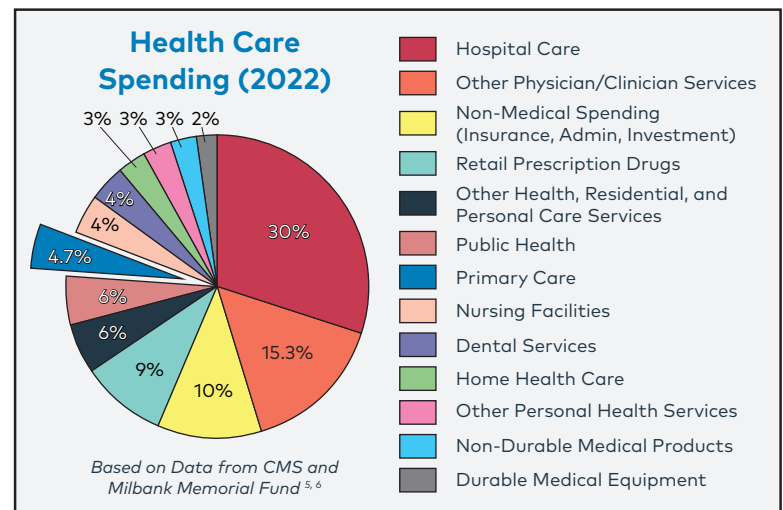
Evidence has also shown that primary care can generate cost-savings—both for patients and taxpayers. Findings from both CMS³ and the CBO⁴ have shown that Accountable Care organizations (ACOs) with a higher proportion of primary care physicians and primary care visits were more likely to generate cost savings – with CMS estimating those ACOs generating twice as much shared savings as other ACOs.

The Cost of Underinvestment

Unfortunately, policymakers have underinvested in primary care—neglecting an opportunity to improve our nation’s health while also controlling costs. In 2022, primary care accounted for **less than 5% of all health care spending**.

Delivering on the Promise of Primary Care

Lawmakers can deliver on the promise of primary care by:



- Making well-constructed primary care **hybrid payment options** – a mix of prospective and fee for service (FFS) – widely available across Medicare and other payers
- **Removing financial barriers** to primary care – in Medicare and in private plans
- Accelerating **behavioral health integration** into primary care
- Supporting **private sector and state primary care** payment innovations
- **Leveraging Medicaid/CHIP** to strengthen primary care in **rural and underserved communities**

1. Leiyu Shi, "The Impact of Primary Care: A Focused Review," Scientifica, December 31, 2012, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3820521/>

2. Sanjay Basu, "Association of US Primary Care Physician Supply and Population Mortality," JAMA Internal Medicine, April 1, 2019, <https://theppcc.pub/PCC-Mortality-JAMA>

3. "Medicare Shared Savings Program Saves Medicare More than \$1.8 Billion...", CMS, August 24, 2023, <https://theppcc.pub/CMS-MSSP-Press-Release>

4. "Medicare Accountable Care Organizations: Past Performance and Future Directions," Congressional Budget Office, April 2024, <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/60213>

5. "National Health Expenditures 2022 Highlights," Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, December 13, 2022, <https://theppcc.pub/2022-Expenditures-CMS>

6. "The Health of US Primary Care: 2024 Scorecard Data Dashboard," Milbank Memorial Fund, March, 2023, <https://www.milbank.org/primary-care-scorecard/>

Communities across the nation are struggling to access high-quality, comprehensive primary care. Below is a snapshot of the state of primary care in Oregon.

Usual Source of Care



16.1%

of people in Oregon lack **a usual source of care** – a trusted professional or facility where someone can get consistent care and health advice.⁷

Childhood Access to Medical Home



50.6%

of children in Oregon **do not have a medical home** – a comprehensive source of care that helps manage all aspects of a child's health.⁷

Primary Care Spend Percent for Seniors



4.2%

of Oregon **health care spending for people over 65** is attributed to primary care – lower than the national average of 5.3%.⁷

Decline in Primary Care Clinicians



13.1%

decline from 2014 to 2019 in the **total number of primary care clinicians** providing care to communities and families in Oregon.⁸

7. "State Health Data Center," Commonwealth Fund, accessed July 31, 2024, <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/datacenter>

8. "Health Is Primary: Charting a Path to Equity and Sustainability," October 2023, <https://thepcc.pub/Health-is-Primary-2023>