



Optimizing ACO Performance: A Practical Guide to Leveraging Data and Technology

Executive Summary

The healthcare industry is at a pivotal point, transitioning from fee-for-service models to value-based care (VBC). Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) are at the forefront of this shift, aiming to deliver high-quality care while reducing costs. However, the complexities of managing complex data, coordinating care, and meeting stringent quality metrics can overwhelm ACOs, especially without the right tools and insights. This whitepaper explores how The Garage's data-driven platform, **Bridge**, is revolutionizing how ACOs operate, addressing key pain points, and driving measurable improvements in patient outcomes and cost management.

Our approach to population health management focuses on simplifying operations, optimizing workflows, and providing actionable insights, making healthcare better for providers, payers, and patients alike. With a proven track record of delivering over **\$1 billion** in gross savings over the last 8 years and **90%+** quality scores across ALL programs, we are committed to helping ACOs navigate the challenges of value-based care and achieve lasting success.

Who We Are

More than just a technology vendor, **The Garage** is a strategic partner in population health management, fully committed to the **Quintuple Aim**. With a digital-first, data-first approach and a relentless focus on innovation, The Garage's population health management platform, Bridge, delivers measurable ROI and empowers healthcare organizations to scale efficiently in value-based care. Trusted by **100+ organizations** nationwide, including ACOs, Health Systems, Payers, FQHCs, and IPAs, we build strategic partnerships tailored to each organization's needs, ensuring flexibility and personalized attention at every step, delivering more than just solutions. Bridge currently manages over **15 million** patient lives across **36 states** while earning top KLAS ratings and making a lasting customer impact.

The Garage's mission is to change healthcare for good...one community at a time. Through Bridge, we empower healthcare leaders to drive organizational efficiency, reduce costs, and improve patient outcomes. With seamless integration across over **127 EHRs**, **70+ HIEs**, and **80%** of payers, Bridge sets the industry benchmark for rapid implementation and guaranteed ROI in **under six months**. Bridge is built with a focus on scalability and innovation, ensuring healthcare organizations continuously benefit from the latest advancements. From scaling value-based care to integrating AI and enabling seamless collaboration across care teams, our Bridge platform isn't just a tool; it's a **growth engine for success**.

ACOs: Meeting the Challenges of Value-Based Care

The shift from fee-for-service to value-based care is reshaping the healthcare landscape. Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) face significant hurdles that demand innovative solutions:



1. **Data Fragmentation** Healthcare data comes from countless sources: EHRs, HIEs, claims data, and wearable devices. Without seamless integration, ACOs struggle to transform these data streams into actionable insights.
2. **Care Coordination** Effective coordination among multiple providers is critical to improving outcomes. Disjointed communication often results in avoidable hospitalizations and subpar patient experiences.
3. **Quality Reporting** ACOs grapple with quality reporting requirements, which often necessitate labor-intensive, manual efforts that detract from direct patient care.
4. **Financial Sustainability** Balancing the total cost of care with quality outcomes and care management is a constant tightrope walk.
5. **Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)** Addressing non-medical factors such as transportation, nutrition, and access to care is crucial to reducing costs and improving outcomes to have a holistic approach.
6. **Chronic Disease Management** Managing patients with chronic conditions requires consistent engagement and personalized care plans. Without integrated tools and proactive outreach, ACOs often struggle to control costs and improve outcomes for these high-risk populations.
7. **Integrated Network** ACOs must develop and maintain a robust, integrated network of providers and services to ensure comprehensive care delivery, reduce network leakage, and optimize patient outcomes. This involves strategically selecting and aligning with high-performing providers, specialists, and ancillary services to create a cohesive ecosystem that supports value-based care objectives.
8. **Regulatory Compliance** ACOs must also navigate complex and ever-changing regulatory requirements, demanding robust compliance systems and strategies.

Regulatory Landscape and Policy Shifts for PY2025

The healthcare landscape is evolving rapidly, with significant changes impacting ACOs and value-based care models. Recent announcements and policy shifts are reshaping the regulatory environment and are expected to continue to change:

CMMI Model Terminations

CMS has recently announced the termination of several models, including:

- Medicare Advantage Value-Based Insurance Design (VBID) model
- Primary Care Models: Making Care Primary and Primary Care First
- End-Stage Renal Disease Treatment Choices
- Maryland Total Cost of Care Model (ending one year early)

These decisions, driven by cost considerations and alignment underscore the ongoing challenge of balancing innovation with fiscal responsibility.

ACO REACH Updates

For the Performance Year 2025, ACO REACH will maintain the blend of historical baseline and



regional expenditures. This stability provides continuity for ACOs but may impact benchmarks for regionally efficient organizations.

Specialty-Focused ACOs

The emergence of specialty-focused ACOs, particularly in oncology and nephrology, introduces unique approaches to value-based care. These specialized models are tailoring interventions to specific patient populations, aiming to drive more targeted improvements in outcomes and cost management. The TEAM (Transforming Equity and Access in Medicare) model, announced by CMS in February 2024, represents a significant advancement in this area. This new model, along with existing specialty-focused ACOs, represents a significant step towards more personalized and equitable value-based care delivery, potentially driving improvements in outcomes and cost management for specific patient populations.

Financial Strategies for ACO Success

Risk Stratification Enhancement

Leveraging advanced analytics to refine risk stratification is crucial. Bridge's AI-powered risk adjustment app gives organizations insights into patients' full HCC histories, uncovering missed conditions and identifying HCC opportunities.

Regional Efficiency Optimization

With the continued emphasis on regional benchmarks, ACOs must optimize their regional efficiency. This may involve targeted cost-reduction strategies and quality improvement initiatives.

Alternative Payment Model Diversification

ACOs can explore diversifying their payment models beyond traditional shared savings arrangements. This could include exploring bundled payments or other innovative reimbursement structures that align with specific patient populations and care delivery models.

Strategic Recommendations for ACOs

1. **Shift in Focus:** Emphasizing cost reduction and savings.
2. **Agility in Model Adoption:** ACOs should remain flexible and ready to adapt to new models as CMMI refocuses its efforts.
3. **Primary Care Innovation:** Despite model cancellations, continue to innovate in primary care delivery, as it remains a foundational component of CMMI's strategy.
4. **Specialty Care Considerations:** Reevaluate strategies for managing high-cost specialty conditions considering model terminations.
5. **Prepare for AHEAD:** Monitor developments in the AHEAD model and position to participate if eligible.
6. **Leverage Technology:** Utilize platforms like Bridge to address key challenges, including care coordination, data integration, and quality reporting.



7. **Focus on the Quintuple Aim:** Align strategies with the Quintuple Aim's goals of lower costs, better patient care, improved community health, sustainable service models for care teams, and equitable access to care.
8. **The Rise of AI:** AI-powered assistants are emerging as essential tools. The Garage's Blaze Copilot AI is a care manager's assistant, automating routine tasks, prioritizing interventions, and providing real-time decision support. This technology empowers care teams to focus on high-impact patient interactions and complex cases.
9. **Point-of-Care Solutions:** Tools like Bridge's point of care tool, BlazeSpeaks support physicians and care teams in real-time within their workflow.
10. **Digital Transformation** Embracing digital solutions is no longer optional but necessary for ACOs to thrive. This includes cloud-based platforms, mobile applications, and telehealth services which are all available through The Garage.

These changes underscore the dynamic nature of the value-based care landscape. ACOs must remain adaptable, focusing on demonstrable cost savings and quality improvements while successfully leveraging innovative technologies to navigate the evolving regulatory environment.

Future Trends in ACOs: 2025-2030

The value-based care (VBC) model is set to grow, with CMS projecting that by 2030, over **90% of Medicare beneficiaries** will participate in VBC arrangements. This evolution presents both challenges and opportunities for ACOs:

- **Growth in Risk-Based Models** CMS aims for **50% of Medicare fee-for-service payments** to be tied to value-based models this year. ACOs that are adept at managing risk will thrive.
- **AI and Predictive Analytics** Artificial intelligence, like Blaze Copilot AI will become indispensable for automating tasks, identifying high-risk patients, predicting outcomes, and managing population health more proactively.
- **Enhanced Patient Engagement** Technology-driven tools, like Bridge will play a central role in engaging patients in their care journey, driving better adherence, engagement and outcomes.
- **Interoperability and Data Sharing** Embracing interoperability will enable ACOs to integrate data from diverse sources, such as EHRs, claims, and wearable devices, creating a comprehensive view of patient health.

How Bridge Solves Key ACO Challenges

Bridge is purpose-built to address the unique challenges ACOs face, delivering practical, data-driven solutions:

1. **Care Coordination & Transitions** Bridge empowers seamless collaboration across providers and care teams through real-time communication tools, improving care transitions and reducing avoidable readmissions.



2. **Interoperability and Comprehensive Data Integration** By unifying data from multiple sources, Bridge eliminates silos, enabling ACOs to monitor quality metrics, track performance, and identify at-risk patients for timely intervention.
3. **Quality Reporting & Compliance** Bridge automates reporting and data collection, ensuring compliance with quality standards while freeing up care teams to focus on patient care.
4. **Patient Engagement** Bridge connects patients through HIPAA-compliant communication channels like text, video, and audio, keeping them informed and actively involved in their care.
5. **Financial Sustainability** Advanced analytics within Bridge identify cost drivers, optimize resource allocation, and help ACOs control spending without compromising quality.
6. **Addressing SDOH:** Nonclinical factors account for up to 80% of healthcare outcomes. The Garage's partnership with Experian SDOH combined with FindHelp gives organizations real-time holistic insight and workflow into the financial, transportation, and technological barriers that could hinder access to care.
7. **Optimized Workflows & Decision Support:** Bridge supports providers with real-time alerts, consolidated patient data, and actionable insights, streamlining workflows and reducing inefficiencies. BlazeSpeaks provides point-of-care decision support for care teams, offering real-time insights and recommendations directly within the clinical workflow.
8. **HCC Coding & Risk Adjustment:** Through Bridge's AI-powered risk adjustment app that empowers organizations with risk-bearing contracts from Medicare to Medicaid, gain insights into patients' full HCC histories year over year. Gain access to suspect HCCs to uncover missed conditions, identify all outstanding HCCs, and see suggested HCCs based on unstructured data to identify missed HCC opportunities.
9. **Care Management:** With Bridge's 360-degree care management application, centralized and de-centralized care teams are equipped to handle diverse populations' clinical and non-clinical needs. From unlimited hot spotting to actionable lists and toolsets for screening and follow-up actions, Bridge has it all to democratize care management for providers and payers. Our new care manager assistant, Blaze Copilot, is the first AI-enabled care manager's digital assistant to automate routine and repetitive tasks, increase outreach and productivity, and drive exponential outcomes. Automating these routine tasks for care managers saves time, reduces cost, boosts revenue, and improves quality scores and compliance.

Case Studies: Proven Impact

Real-World Impact: Scalable Success for ACOs

Our proven track record and deep expertise with ACO entities makes us the partner of choice for Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) nationwide. To date, we've helped our Medicare ACO customers achieve over **\$1 billion** in cumulative gross savings with **90%+ Quality scores** across all programs. **Guaranteed ROI:** ACOs see returns in under **six months**.



A **VP/Executive** emphasized the impact on quality and cost, *“The outcomes with Bridge are very strong. One reason we went with Bridge is that using the system and stratifying our population into levels of risk really helps us drive the outcomes to a point where we can increase the quality of care and quality outcomes, and it helps us reduce costs overall.”* 2025 Best in KLAS, January 2025, collected by KLAS Research

Other results include:

- **SDOH Impact:** Improved screening rates by **200%-300%**, driving **\$300K-\$400K** in annualized revenue.
- **Improved Outcomes:** **20%** reduction in hospital readmissions, **19%** reduction in medical errors, **30% to 45%** increase in response rates via digital outreach to patients, and **10% to 15%** increase in Chronic Care Management/Remote Patient Monitoring Services driving **\$1M to \$2M** in new revenue.
- **Enhanced Operational Efficiency:** Reduced reporting and administrative burdens, enabling providers to focus on patient care.
- **Data Interoperability Enhancements:** Data interoperability capabilities have been significantly expanded through strategic partnerships with Health Gorilla, Labcorp, Experian, Find Help, and IMO Health.

A **VPI Executive** said, *“Integration and interoperability are central things we use Bridge for. We connect to tons of data sources and feed them into Bridge, and how the products work together is one of the most critical parts of it, especially in the US healthcare system where there is no centralized organization. We have multiple EHRs, and none of them are connected, so we have to be able to get data sources out of all of them and connect things. That integration is one of the key pieces for why we have appreciated The Garage’s efforts.”* 2025 Best in KLAS, April 2024, collected by KLAS Research

Highlighted Success Story: Rapid Bridge Implementation

One notable success story involved a leading physician enablement organization that owns and operates ACO MSSPs, REACH ACOs, Medicare Advantage MSOs, and Commercial Value-Based Care Contracts. With over 140 practices, 700 practitioners, and a network of more than 139,000 patients, this customer sought a comprehensive and unified platform to support the operations of its three ACOs and offered streamlined data integration across these entities, and enabled advanced analytics, care management efforts, and quality measure reporting in compliance with Medicare’s Clinical Quality Measure (CQM) requirements ensuring its ACOs met regulatory standards. They partnered with The Garage who successfully:

- **Implemented Bridge for the customer's ACOs in just four weeks**, exceeding expectations for speed and efficiency.
- Processed over **2.4 million claims** for 325 physicians across 104 practices, including both CMS claims and Florida HIE data.

[Read the full use case here.](#)



Highlighted Success Story: Preventing DME Fraud

Another success story involved helping an ACO customer identify and flag potential durable medical equipment (DME) fraud. By leveraging The Garage's data warehouse and our Senior Data Analysts with only two months of runout, the customer determined:

- A **Potential Shared Savings Loss** of **\$2.8M** to CMS.
- A **\$2.0M boost** in shared savings payments to the ACO itself—over 25% of projected total shared savings earned.

[Read the full use case here.](#)

Revolutionizing Healthcare Data Management

At The Garage, we're transforming how healthcare organizations handle data and deliver care. Our approach focuses on:

1. Aggregating vast amounts of data into a normalized view using our advanced data engines and algorithms.
2. Serving this data as "Tiny, Tasty Morsels" in an inclusive hub for care teams.
3. Empowering healthcare professionals to act on clear signals, not just noise.

Tiny, Tasty Morsels: A Game-Changer in Healthcare

Our innovative concept of "Tiny, Tasty Morsels" is revolutionizing how we present and utilize healthcare data:

- **Definition:** These morsels are bite-sized, actionable pieces of information derived from our comprehensive data analysis.
- **Purpose:** They empower care teams to make informed decisions quickly and efficiently.
- **Versatility:** Morsels can take various forms, including point-of-care intelligence, mobile app notifications, aggregated scorecards, or any other format relevant to your organization's goals.

Unifying Care Delivery

The Garage's cohesive strategy brings together these elements to create a true digital front door for healthcare:

1. **Unified View:** We create a consolidated view of these morsels, accommodating synchronous, asynchronous, and in-person engagements.
2. **Universal Sharing:** Our platform enables seamless collaboration within the healthcare ecosystem, ensuring that vital information is accessible to all relevant parties.
3. **Inclusive Approach:** By integrating our model pillars with function, we deliver these morsels to serve care managers, providers, and patients alike.



The Impact of Our Approach

By implementing this strategy, healthcare organizations can:

- Improve decision-making processes
- Enhance care coordination
- Increase efficiency in data utilization
- Provide more personalized patient care

Our commitment to creating a cohesive, non-siloed approach ensures that healthcare providers have the tools they need to deliver optimal care in today's complex healthcare landscape.

The Road Ahead: The Quintuple Aim and Provider Well-Being

The Garage is committed to empowering the **Quintuple Aim**:

- **Lower Costs of Care** – ACOs can lower the total cost of care by shifting from fee-for-service to value-based care models, reducing unnecessary hospitalizations, streamlining care coordination, and eliminating inefficiencies.
- **Better Care for the Patient** – Through proactive, data-driven care management, ACOs can ensure patients receive timely, high-quality, and coordinated care tailored to their unique needs, resulting in improved outcomes and satisfaction.
- **Improved Health of Communities** – With ACOs focusing on preventative care, chronic disease management, and social determinants of health to promote wellness, they can reduce health disparities and improve overall population health.
- **Sustainable Service Model for Care Teams** – By reducing administrative burdens, optimizing workflows, and aligning incentives with quality outcomes, ACOs can create a sustainable and rewarding care model for clinicians, reducing burnout and improving job satisfaction.
- **Equitable Access to Care for All** – ACOs can prioritize health equity by addressing barriers to care, expanding access to underserved populations by leveraging telehealth, and integrating community resources to ensure all patients, no matter their background, receive high-quality healthcare.

Impact on Provider Well-Being

Bridge's cloud-based, mobile-enabled population health management platform aggregates diverse patient data, enhances patient accessibility and efficiency, and empowers all healthcare stakeholders. Through its universal sharing, all normalized disparate patient data sources become a digital front door across the care continuum and creates a connected ecosystem where healthcare stakeholders can collaborate more effectively towards their holistic healthcare goals and realize the principles of the Quintuple Aim.

As healthcare grows more complex, provider burnout remains a critical challenge. Bridge, alongside our point-of-care tool BlazeSpeaks and care team's assistant Blaze Copilot AI, streamlines workflows, automates tasks, delivers real-time decision support, and enables



seamless collaboration – ensuring clinicians focus on delivering high-quality care while improving both patient outcomes and provider well-being.

A CEO explained, “In theory, Providers use the information to find gaps in care. In addition, we have something that mines the data for the EHR for HCC codes and then presents that data to the doctors in the EHR. We use Bridge to check that coding. We show them what Bridge says based on however many years of claims so that we can get some of the noise out of there. That process seems to work pretty well.” 2025 Best in KLAS, January 2025, collected by KLAS Research

How We Implement: Practical Steps to Success

1. **Rapid Onboarding** Bridge integrates seamlessly with existing systems for minimal disruption.
2. **Data Integration** EHR, payer, and backend agnostic, Bridge consolidates data from various platforms, including claims and clinical data, eliminating migration challenges.
3. **Training & Support** Comprehensive and unlimited training ensures that staff quickly adapt to and maximize the platform’s potential.

VPI/Executive noted, “The Garage has been amazing and very responsive. We have gotten what we were expecting in terms of technology and data, and the vendor has delivered everything on time. Their team in general has been super responsive from the technology side to the business side and their leadership. The engineering team is very competent and able to do advanced things, such as API connections and file sharing. And The Garage has good customer service.” 2025 Best in KLAS, April 2024, collected by KLAS Research

Conclusion

The landscape of Accountable Care Organizations is rapidly evolving, driven by technological advancements, regulatory changes, and a growing emphasis on value-based care. As we look towards the future, ACOs must embrace innovation, prioritize data-driven decision-making, and focus on achieving the Quintuple Aim. Integrating AI, machine learning, and advanced analytics will be crucial in predicting patient outcomes, optimizing resource allocation, and enhancing care coordination. Simultaneously, the shift towards more specialized ACO models and the increasing focus on addressing social determinants of health will pave the way for more personalized and equitable healthcare delivery. As regulatory frameworks continue to evolve, organizations must remain agile and adaptive. The key to success lies in leveraging cutting-edge technologies, fostering meaningful patient and provider engagement, and continuously refining strategies to manage risk and improve outcomes.

By embracing these forward-thinking approaches and leveraging platforms like Bridge, ACOs can not only navigate the complexities of value-based care but also lead the charge in transforming healthcare delivery. The future of ACOs is not just about cost savings and quality



metrics; it's about reimagining healthcare as a proactive, patient-centered, and technologically empowered ecosystem that truly puts value at its core.

Ready to take the next step? [Contact us today](#) for a demo and see how we can help your ACO achieve its full potential. Together, we can change healthcare for good...one community at a time!