Network-related terms

Provider cluster: The population and physicians, both primary care and specialists, linked to a particular hospital. Identifying provider clusters was the first step in the process.

Network: An aggregation of provider clusters, based on high admission and physician loyalty, close geographic proximity, and geographic information system (GIS) mapping, with a minimum population of 50 000 residents. A network consisted of the combined population, physicians, and hospitals linked to its component provider clusters.

Satellite network: A collection of small rural provider clusters that were geographically distinct from the large hospital upon which they depended for complex services. The population served and the local services provided were very different from those in the nearest large provider cluster.

Loyalty-related terms

Admission loyalty: Percentage of a provider cluster (or network) population's total admissions that were to the linked hospital (or network hospitals).

Physician loyalty: Percentage of a provider cluster (or network) population's ambulatory visits that were with physicians linked to the cluster (or network).

Primary care loyalty: Percentage of a provider cluster (or network) population's ambulatory visits that were with primary care physicians linked to the cluster (or network).

As an example, for the population in network A, network loyalty was computed as follows (where PC = primary care):

$$\text{Network A admission loyalty} = \frac{\text{No. of admissions to hospitals in network A}}{\text{No. of admissions}}$$

$$\text{Network A physician loyalty} = \frac{\text{No. of ambulatory visits to physicians in network A}}{\text{No. of ambulatory visits}}$$

$$\text{Network A PC loyalty} = \frac{\text{No. of ambulatory visits to PC physicians in network A}}{\text{No. of ambulatory visits to PC physicians}}$$