The Accountable Care Organization (ACO) Investment Model (AIM) operated under the Shared Savings Program (SSP) from 2015 to 2018. AIM provided up-front payments to select ACOs to invest in infrastructure and staffing. It targeted:

- **New ACOs** to encourage their formation in rural or low ACO penetration areas (41 AIM Test 1 ACOs began in 2016).
- **Existing ACOs** that were small to encourage their continued participation and transition to two-sided financial risk (6 AIM Test 2 ACOs began in 2015 or 2016).

AIM ACOs received up-front payments for two years. These payments can be recouped from shared savings earned by AIM ACOs for up to six years. A total of $96.2M in AIM payments were dispersed. So far, 54.2% of funds have been recouped through 2018.

### AIM ACOs Grew in Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assigned Beneficiaries</td>
<td>421,561</td>
<td>469,728</td>
<td>492,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACO Practitioners</td>
<td>4,064</td>
<td>4,427</td>
<td>5,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility-Based Providers</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>691</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### AIM ACOs’ Market Characteristics

- Fewer other ACOs: 28.6% (AIM ACOs) 53.1% (Similar non-AIM ACOs)
- Fewer other CMMI initiatives: 3.0% (AIM ACOs) 6.9% (Similar non-AIM ACOs)
- Higher rurality: 27.0% (AIM ACOs) 70.2% (Similar non-AIM ACOs)
- Higher rates of health professional shortages: 15.5% (AIM ACOs) 7.3% (Similar non-AIM ACOs)
- Greater disadvantage (Area Deprivation Index ranking): 60.6% (AIM ACOs) 52.8% (Similar non-AIM ACOs)
- Lower rates of Medicare Advantage: 24.6% (AIM ACOs) 31.6% (Similar non-AIM ACOs)

### AIM ACO Status

- **55.3% (26)** Earned some shared savings through 2018
- **59.6% (28)** Returned all or some of their AIM funds
- **63.2% (24)** Indicated in a survey that AIM funds were critical to their ACO formation
- **19.1% (9)** Took on two-sided financial risk
- **62.7% (29)** Did not renew but fully or partially joined other ACOs by 2020
- **29.8% (14)** AIM ACOs remained in the Shared Savings Program through 2020
ACO Investment Model (AIM)
Final Evaluation of Three AIM Performance Years

Findings at a Glance

### Findings

**AIM Test 1 ACOs Reduced Spending and Utilization Relative to Comparison Beneficiaries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Spending Reductions (Millions)</th>
<th>Net Savings to Medicare (Millions)</th>
<th>PY3 removes any unrecouped AIM payments as of the end of 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018 (PY3)</td>
<td>$-38.73</td>
<td>$-207.7</td>
<td>$-119.7 (2.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 (PY2)</td>
<td>$-36.94</td>
<td>$-187.7</td>
<td>$-153.4 (3.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 (PY1)</td>
<td>$-28.21</td>
<td>$-131.0</td>
<td>$-108.4 (2.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Across all three performance years, AIM Test 1 ACOs made statistically significant reductions in several types of utilization (PY3 percentages shown):
- Spending on inpatient hospitalizations (-4.0%), hospital outpatient visits (-3.7%), skilled nursing facility stays (-7.8%), and home health episodes (-8.2%);
- Utilization of emergency department visits not resulting in hospital admission (-2.9%);
- Hospital readmissions (-4.4%).

**Most AIM ACOs Reduced Spending Compared to Similar Non-AIM SSP ACOs**

- 22 ACOs decreased total Medicare spending.
- 3 ACOs increased total Medicare spending.
- 20 ACOs had an inconsistent spending pattern.

**AIM ACOs Maintained Quality of Care**

Very small differences in measures of patient/caregiver experience between beneficiaries assigned to AIM ACOs and comparison beneficiaries who responded to the ACO Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey.

**Key Takeaways**

- AIM ACOs located in areas with greater health care needs and less access to accountable care. Many AIM ACOs indicated that AIM funds were critical to their formation.
- AIM ACOs were successful in reducing total Medicare spending and related utilization without decreasing the quality of care they provided. AIM generated net savings to Medicare during each of the three performance years.
- Most AIM ACOs ended participation in the Shared Savings Program at the end of 2018. However, many of their providers partially or fully joined other SSP ACOs in 2019.

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This document summarizes the evaluation report prepared by an independent contractor. To learn more about AIM and to download the Second Annual Evaluation Report, visit [https://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/ACO-Investment-Model/](https://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/ACO-Investment-Model/)