



HealthySteps is an innovative and evidence-based model that achieves cost savings through services delivered to children and families.

HealthySteps is an evidence-based, team-based pediatric primary care program that promotes nurturing parenting and healthy development for babies and toddlers. In a HealthySteps practice, a child development expert, known as a HealthySteps Specialist (HS Specialist), is integrated into the primary care team and supports practice-wide implementation of all model components. (For detailed information on the model, visit healthysteps.org.)

Based on comprehensive, universal screening, as well as clinical judgment and parental concern, the practice identifies children and families in need of additional HS Specialist support. The HS Specialist then connects with families during and between well-child visits to provide support for common and complex concerns that physicians often lack time to address, such as feeding, behavior, sleep, attachment, depression, social determinants of health, and adapting to life with a baby or young child. HS Specialists provide families with parenting guidance, appropriate referrals, and care coordination/systems navigation, all specific to each family's needs.

Costs of Implementing HealthySteps

The two primary costs of the program are: (1) the HS Specialist salary, including benefits, and (2) the initial HealthySteps Training Institute costs. The salary can vary depending on the licensure and credentialing of the HS Specialist and the market demands of the site. The HealthySteps Training Institute is a two-day training, with two expert presenters from the National Office, and the cost is normally \$25,000 per site, although a lower cost may be possible if multiple sites are trained at the same time. The Training Institute includes comprehensive pre-planning, including a Practice Readiness Assessment, and six hours of follow up technical assistance. HealthySteps does not charge an ongoing annual affiliate fee to HealthySteps sites. (All information accurate as of May 2019 and subject to change.)

Additional costs include optional program materials and supplies for families as well as general IT costs associated with cell phones, computers, and printers for HS Specialists. HealthySteps sites that add enhancements, such as home visiting, may incur additional costs.

Typically, funding one FTE HS Specialist allows a practice to provide the universal components of the model to up to 2,000 children annually. From that population of 2,000, HS Specialists can provide short-term child development and behavior consults to up to 300 children annually and comprehensive services (i.e., ongoing, preventive team-based well child visits) to an additional 300 children annually. ***The cost per child, for the most comprehensive services, ranges up to \$450 annually*** based on a variety of factors including: the total number of children served; HS Specialist salaries; local service delivery enhancements/adaptations; and funder-specific administrative requirements.

Funding for HealthySteps Sites

Sustaining HealthySteps over time requires braiding together a diverse set of funding mechanisms to support initial and ongoing programmatic costs. ***The National Office HealthySteps Policy and Finance Team is committed to supporting sites with identifying and pursuing available funding streams and maximizing service reimbursement, which is critical for long-term success.*** Some HealthySteps sites currently finance their programs with a single source of one-time funding, as opposed to continuous or diverse funding sources. This funding is often in the form of time-limited grants, either from government agencies, philanthropic foundations, or local entities. Grant funding is an excellent means of initially implementing a HealthySteps program, but alone it does not provide a pathway to sustainability.

Because HealthySteps is based in pediatric and family medicine settings, there are opportunities to bill for services provided to children and families. HealthySteps provides additional services beyond what may be traditionally provided in the pediatrician's office, such as maternal depression screening, social-emotional and developmental screening, family protective and risk factor screening, anticipatory and positive parenting guidance, and referrals and systems navigation support for families requiring services outside of the primary care setting. Sites must actively pursue reimbursement for these services, by billing public and private insurance for specific HealthySteps services rendered to children and families. Reimbursement varies greatly from state to state, across payers, and depending on the professional licensing of the HS Specialist and the license or operating structure of the pediatric practice itself. For example, licensed clinical psychologists and social workers can bill for a wider range of services than bachelor-level child development specialists. The Policy and Finance Team can support sites as they pursue reimbursement, including assisting Federally Qualified Health Centers as they consider alternative funding options.

Further, to the degree possible, sites' long-term funding plans should maximize sustainable revenue from public and private health care payers and should explore innovative payment options (e.g., value-based purchasing, direct contracting with health plans, and capitated service arrangements) beyond traditional service reimbursement.

Other funding sources to consider, depending on practice/system size, state environment, and population served, include: (1) health system reinvestment and department funds; (2) municipal, county, state, and federal funds, including budget line items, tax monies from tobacco and cannabis sales, and publicly-funded grants; (3) the Department of Defense and Indian Health Service; and (4) philanthropic funders.

For more information on financing and sustainability, please contact Senior Director of Growth and Sustainability Jennifer Tracey at JTracey@zerotothree.org.