Barry et al., “The Early Impact Of The ‘Alternative Quality Contract’ On Mental Health Service Use And Spending In Massachusetts”

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• accountable care using global payment with performance bonuses has promise in controlling spending growth and improving care

• this study looks at the effect of the Alternative Quality Contract (ACQ) of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA) on care for mental illness

• compared spending and use for ACQ organization enrollees with non-ACQ organization enrollees

• ACQ organization enrollees were slightly less likely to use mental health services

• among users of mental health services, there was a small decline in total healthcare spending but no change in mental health spending

• declines in probability of mental health service use were concentrated among enrollees in ACQ organizations that accepted financial risk for behavioral health