Increased employee engagement impacts bottom line

**Situation**
Amid a challenging time for the airline industry, this airline experienced double digit annual medical trends (as high as 20 percent and 15 percent, respectively). A close look at the employee population revealed low engagement among employees, including those living with chronic diseases, as well as misuse of benefits, including inappropriate emergency room visits. To reverse this trend, a need for a revised cost-management strategy was necessary.

**Objectives**
UnitedHealthcare collaborated with the employer to identify and address the root causes of employees’ chronic illnesses and high medical spend. Areas of focus included:

- Holistic care management
- Increased employee engagement
- Improved decision-making related to physician and treatment choices

8-year average trend of 4.5 percent down from 20% in 2002 and significantly lower than the 11.3% book of business average¹
Primary Initiatives
To achieve its desired outcomes, this airline embarked on a long-term strategy towards an integrated and holistic approach to health benefits. This included a custom on-site nurse team dedicated to its members, customized and targeted communications campaigns, and tools and resources to empower members to make better health care decisions through a Consumer-Driven Health Plan (CDHP).

Results
By evaluating their strategy on an ongoing basis, and making adjustments when needed, this airline was able to reduce costs and improve member decision-making.

Reduced Costs

- **Smart physician and treatment decisions** – Decisions to shift providers or treatments delivered an estimated $1.1 million in medical cost savings.\(^2\)

- **Reduced trend** – The eight-year average trend was 4.5 percent compared with the book of business average of 11.3 percent\(^3\), leading to an estimated cumulative savings of $850 million (based on trend mitigation compared to the overall book of business).

- **Clinical management savings** – $21.1 million or $10.82 per member per month in 2010.

Improved Decision Making

- **Informed decision making** – Emergency room utilization was 23 percent below the book of business for 2009.

- **65% Utilization of the UnitedHealth Premium® designation program**

"Our people aren’t tied to a desk; they’re flying. So access to great tools and resources no matter where they are is important.”
Airline Managing Director, Health Strategy and Resources

KEY MILESTONES

2003
Dedicated primary nurse team

2006
Disease management and cancer support
Robust communication program focused on optimal health care decisions – including UnitedHealth Premium® designation program

2008
Full replacement Consumer-Driven Health Plan; on-site enrolers and customized communication materials for open enrollment
Treatment Decision Support, Employee Assistance Program services transitioned to United Behavioral Health from the airline

2010
Centers of Excellence programs: infertility; bariatric; neonatal and kidney; behavior health resources added to nurse team; on-site nurse wellness coordinator at the employer’s headquarters; and NowClinic

2011
Ortho Centers of Excellence program to address high musculoskeletal spend, enhanced NurseLine™

2012
Total Population Management program. Conservative Spine Centers pilot (Atlanta) to address high musculoskeletal spend; UnitedHealth Personal Rewards™ program

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