Treatment decision support helps reduce costs

When one chronic condition is driving up costs, how do you reverse the trend?

A financial services company faced a significant challenge: musculoskeletal conditions – hip, knee and back pain – were accounting for an ever-growing percentage of its annual medical spend. UnitedHealthcare was approached to devise a unique solution that would empower members to make informed treatment decisions and lower costs.

The outcome was an Orthopedic Decision Support pilot program that engaged members with incentives and targeted communications. The program helped identify preventive, cost-effective treatment options with the greatest potential to make a positive impact.

A new message for members

Because many members with musculoskeletal conditions end up having surgery – a high-cost option – it was important to reach them early with communications and support about less invasive, but equally effective treatment options. Members who enrolled in the pilot program received a $250 health plan credit and a free subscription to a leading online health resource.

Communication and engagement were centerpieces of the program's success. UnitedHealthcare identified members with musculoskeletal and orthopedic conditions, and targeted them with a simple message: if you have hip, knee or back concerns, call to speak with a registered nurse about your condition. You may be eligible for a special participation incentive. With the employer's green light, proactive member outreach included postcards and an ongoing workplace awareness campaign.

The New Numbers*

Claims savings over two years:

$1.24 Million

Members enrolled in pilot program over three years:

479

UnitedHealthcare Health Plan Modernization Continuum

		Currently		
Initiation	Awareness	Accountability	Ownership	

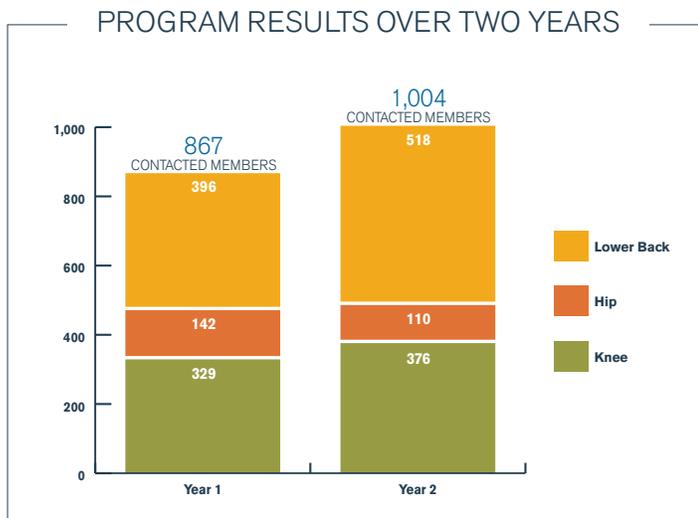| Area of focus	Action/Solution
Engagement	Incentives
Communications	Targeted/workplace awareness

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Taking the next step

Among the members who responded to the outreach, those planning to receive surgery within six months became active participants. They completed coaching sessions with a treatment decision support (TDS) nurse, who provided condition education, treatment options, admission counseling, information about best-in-class doctors and facilities and post-surgery recovery guidance. (TDS coaching was also available to those who were not considering surgery.)

Making an impact

Results included more than $1.24 million in claims savings over two years, and validation of an approach – through the use of communications and incentives – that ultimately reduced potentially unnecessary, unsafe or ineffective care.

Today, the approach has been expanded to include a preventive track for members who had musculoskeletal pain but were not considering surgical options. These members were engaged much earlier in the treatment process with intervention and education that promoted better decision-making about care.

PROGRAM RESULTS OVER TWO YEARS

867 CONTACTED MEMBERS
- Lower Back: 396
- Hip: 142
- Knee: 329
- **Year 1**

1,004 CONTACTED MEMBERS
- Lower Back: 518
- Hip: 110
- Knee: 376
- **Year 2**

Legend:
- Lower Back
- Hip
- Knee

MUSCULOSKELETAL 3-PART PILOT PROGRAM

Member Diagnosed

Member diagnosed with musculoskeletal condition:
- Hip pain
- Knee pain
- Low back pain

Coaching Session

Member completed coaching session with TDS Nurse and received:
- Condition education and treatment options
- List of providers and facilities
- Admission counseling and recovery information

Member Incentives

Member incentives:
- Members received a nationally recognized online health resource subscription
- HRA and PPO members received a financial incentive credit of $250 to their HRA or In Network OOP maximum

Member communication and engagement were key elements to the program's success.

To learn more about modernizing your health plan through impactful programs targeting members with chronic conditions, visit **uhc.com.**

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