



LEADING A HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER STAFF DURING A NEW ERA POST PANDEMIC

Now more than ever school districts need leadership that is doing more with less in the face of adversity. There is no longer the umbrella of collective bargaining agreements; paired with the heightened emotions and challenges around COVID-19 response policies and budget challenges, there is an increased need for proactive solutions and communications from the leaders in the district.

If you are reacting to these challenges as they appear, it is unlikely you are leading to a specific destination. But with proper planning, you can take control of the process and, demonstrating best practices, you are more likely to find yourself, your district, staff and community respecting the approach.

Kalise Horst, CEO of Steeping Wellness, sees great opportunity to make changes in these unique times. “What we’re seeing right now are school district employees who are completely burned out and overwhelmed, making our employees' overall health worse. By providing simple opportunities and shifts, we can help create environments that better their well-being and engagement, while increasing retention and decreasing the long-term cost of healthcare,” Horst says.

Changes in Delivery of Care

The largest variable in overall cost has continued to be healthcare. Districts have an opportunity to take more and more control in their future with the changes that have occurred in healthcare delivery through in response to the pandemic. Technology and primary care are the focal points of the opportunity. Traditional healthcare models

focus on treating conditions, not improving health to prevent claims. But when complex claims are driving up costs in prescriptions and care delivery, traditional, reactionary medicine is not a sustainable financial model. Engaging plan members in improving their health not only helps reduce costs, but also helps create a culture that demonstrates you are doing something for them instead of simply reacting to health conditions and challenges as they come up.

Successful Implementation

Before getting started, it is important for districts to assess their employees’ openness to change and vet local providers for the ability to provide convenient healthcare at lower costs:

Step 1 - Understanding employees’ openness to change.

When surveying two districts, we found that 85% of employees rarely or occasionally sought healthcare, if at all. But we did find that 87% of employees were comfortable with using technology to access healthcare. We assisted the districts in setting up remote care options to help employees better access and engage with their own health and wellbeing. After using remote care for several months, data showed employees were actively using online services to communicate with their provider, set appointments, and follow up on lab work. This improved engagement helps ensure employees get the healthcare they need on their terms.

Step 2 - Gap analysis of local providers

Review local providers for their ability to provide convenient healthcare at a low- or no-cost structure, sustainable to the district and health plan. Once you have identified providers willing to work with your district, you can begin to build a care model convenient for your staff and the healthcare provider.

For example, the districts of East Troy, Elkhorn and Randall adopted a direct primary care (DPC) model, via NICE Healthcare, partnering with healthcare providers willing to accept an alternative pricing structure. The districts access primary care on a flat-fee basis charged to the district instead of a fee for service charged to individual plan members. Plan members also now have access to a variety of convenient care options, such as on-site clinics, as well as in-home and virtual visits. Convenient, cost-free access to care has shown to improve population health, overall claim levels and plan sustainability.

These are just two examples of successfully implemented alternative healthcare delivery methods that have improved engagement and overall population health, and reduced health plan costs.

Join us Tuesday, August 10 for our “Ask Us at USI” webinars in which we facilitate two different discussions. [At 9am](#), we’ll discuss strategic benefits planning and best practices. The second discussion [at 9:30am](#) will share best practice approaches to population health management and benefits communication and technology.

Contact us for additional resources and guidance on this value-added service.

How can we help?

Experience the USI ONE Advantage® and learn how our highly specialized solutions and services can improve your employee benefits program.

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