Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska Transforms Care Management and Achieves Significant Medical Cost Savings

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The care management challenge: a call to action

Care management is a proven approach for managing high-risk members, as demonstrated by many health plans. Most health plan care management programs rely on telephonic or in-person communications that may be expensive to scale or have limited reach based on the means of communication. Thus, there is often more that can be done with the skilled talent of the nurses and other clinicians to maximize their expertise to benefit their members.

In 2015, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE), a health plan serving approximately 500,000 members, determined it could expand its approach for managing care beyond relying on telephonic outreach, as it presented barriers to high levels of member engagement. Like many other health plans, the key challenges for BCBSNE’s care management program included:

- Missing or inaccurate member telephone numbers;
- Difficulty reaching members, even with accurate phone numbers;
- Challenges in sustaining relationships with members beyond a few conversations; and overall,
- Experiencing limited time with members, given other responsibilities and high case loads.

Recognizing these challenges, and the fact that health care often happens between physician visits and care manager phone calls, BCBSNE realized that they were not always engaging with their members at the levels they wanted through greater member engagement, self-care, and ease of communication between members and care managers.

Mobile-enabled care management amplifies clinical impact

With a corporate focus on innovation, and with engagement as a key company strategy, BCBSNE searched for a solution that would extend and amplify their current care management resources to drive deeper member relationships. BCBSNE selected Wellframe as their partner, with the goal of leveraging its mobile care management solution. With the Wellframe solution, care managers from BCBSNE could work with members through a mobile application on members’ smartphones or tablets, easily delivering a personalized, daily care plan and HIPAA-compliant messaging.

BCBSNE had already achieved positive results from their telephonic care management program called Care Transitions for members recently discharged from the hospital, and selected this program for its initial Wellframe deployment. While BCBSNE started with transitional care, the appeal of the Wellframe solution was that it could be applied to any of their care management programs.

For the initial Care Transitions deployment of mobile care

Wellframe helps us know how to better care manage people and deliver individual care planning on their time, at their convenience, and that’s how the world is now. We have to adjust, too.

Norine Domenge
BCBS Nebraska Director of Nurse Care Management & Clinical Policy
management, BCBSNE care managers conducted phone outreach to members who were recently discharged from the hospital. During each call, the care manager explained the mobile solution and how it would help them stay in regular communication over the next 30 days. The care manager personalized the members’ care programs and educational content based on the cause of hospitalization. Once members enrolled, the BCBSNE care manager performed ongoing outreach and support and adjusted the care programs based on real-time insights. Meanwhile, members regularly recorded their health status and progress toward their care plan goals, while staying educated on health-related content.

### Strong results: metrics that matter

For BCBSNE, the Wellframe solution achieved positive results on member engagement and self-care, ease of communication between member and care manager, care manager productivity, and importantly, health outcomes. As part of its deployment, BCBSNE implemented a comprehensive measurement system to evaluate opportunities for continual improvement by regularly reviewing robust data sets and qualitative stories from care managers and members on a weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis. The team began gathering early, quantifiable results within weeks of using Wellframe as a core component of their Care Transitions program.

### Catalyzing broader care management transformation

In addition to the successful results from the Care Transitions program, there were many lessons learned from the BCBSNE leadership and care managers. Here are some of these insights:

- **Amplify, don’t replace.** It’s not necessary to completely remove and replace your current care management system to achieve improvements; in fact, extending and amplifying systems already in place can deliver tangible results.

- **Focus on change management.** The team recognized that change management is a key element of success. Extending existing systems requires changing workflows and often requires

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80% OF VARIANCE IN HEALTH OUTCOMES IS DUE TO NON-CLINICAL FACTORS

1 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. County Health Rankings, 2016

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Wellframe mobile model</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ONBOARDING MOBILE APP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUSTAINED MOBILE MESSAGES, REMINDERS, EDUCATIONAL CONTENT, &amp; OTHER INTERACTIONS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>START</strong></td>
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<td><strong>NO CONTACT</strong></td>
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Current telephonic model
care managers to go beyond the comfort zone of familiar processes.

- **Commit to innovation.** A commitment to innovation, including strong leadership sponsorship, is important to drive the program forward.

- **Go agile and iterate.** Taking an agile, more stepwise approach helps BCBSNE learn and iterate with the solution and workflows, establishing a firm foundation for accelerating wider adoption.

- **Measure aggressively, continuously improve.** It is possible to deploy a mobile care solution and not only see immediate benefit, but also successfully quantify those results on a consistent, on-going basis. BCBSNE actively measured and documented results to gauge their progress, which helped to justify next steps and further expansion.

Given these compelling results and lessons learned, the BCBSNE team continues to leverage the Wellframe solution to further improve their care management programs. For example, the Wellframe solution is now used in BCBSNE’s health coaching, case management, and behavioral health programs. Additionally, BCBSNE onsite nurses, who visit members in the hospital, are enrolling members into pre-discharge programs, eliminating the gap between discharge and access to supportive services that help ensure better clinical outcomes.

Meanwhile, BCBSNE has launched efforts through new communication channels to promote the solution among their membership and further scale participation in care management. Overall, the solution has enabled higher-performing team structures, while also creating a positive impact on member experience.

**Susan Beaton**
BCBS Nebraska VP Provider Services, Care Management, and Risk

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### Care plan adherence

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand medication regimen after discharge</td>
<td>96%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education videos and articles consumed each week</td>
<td>4+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys &amp; assessments answered each week</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correct responses to quiz on safe acetaminophen dosage</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attended follow-up visit within 14 days post-discharge</td>
<td>77%</td>
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Medical cost savings

**POST-HOSPITALIZATION MEDICAL COSTS**

- **Primary cost of savings**
  - Inpatient services
  - Outpatient services

- **Improved patterns of care utilization**
  - Primary care visits
  - Hospital readmissions

**Care manager productivity**

**Time per patient interaction**

- **Telephonic Care Manager**
  - Time: 8.5 min

- **Mobile Care Manager**
  - Time: 3 min

**Time is also saved by avoiding**

- Phone number look-up
- Missed calls
- Returning patients' calls

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**Patient engagement**

- **Telephonic Care Management**
  - 1-5 calls per month
  - 4-5 messages per week
  - 400% increase in touchpoints

- **Mobile Care Management**
  - 2 calls on average over 30 days
  - 63% average weekly engagement
  - 67% of patients engage with care plan every week
About Wellframe

Wellframe’s clinically-driven solution seamlessly connects a member-facing, HIPAA-compliant mobile solution to a care management dashboard. Friction-free, frequent interaction through the Wellframe platform fosters a sustained relationship to enable timely interventions, encourage communication, and promote self-management.

Wellframe partners with leading health plans to transform care management and member engagement. Our mobile-enabled care management program optimally extends existing care management systems and resources to provide members with ongoing guidance and support, when and where they need it. Wellframe’s data-driven approach delivers proven results including improved member experience, reduced medical spend and increased efficiency.

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