

## CASE STUDY

# Getting Employees the Right Care at the Right Time to Improve Outcomes and Reduce Costs

Temple University Health System, a nationally-recognized academic health system in Philadelphia, aims to provide its patients — and its employees — with access to some of the world’s most advanced clinical care. Using sophisticated technologies, advanced treatments and research-based innovations, TUHS is transforming scientific breakthroughs into a new generation of safer, more effective therapies, and rewriting the standards for how serious and chronic diseases are treated. With rising healthcare costs and generous access to health system resources, TUHS needed to find a solution to more cost-effectively utilize care. Who better to partner with a healthcare pioneer than an innovator like Accolade?

### THE SITUATION

#### Inconsistent Utilization Of Right Services Driving Up Healthcare Costs

Temple University Health System (TUHS) employs a mix of unionized workers, service professionals and clinicians who are encouraged to use the Temple system for their own healthcare. Designed into their benefits plans as a lower cost option, utilization of TUHS healthcare services is intended to ensure employees receive the highest quality of care cost-effectively. Nevertheless, some TUHS employees have resisted seeking treatment within the system. Some find it awkward to be treated by their colleagues, while others consult informally with co-workers on health issues. In some cases, employees and their families seek other providers as a matter of convenience.

**The inconsistent use of TUHS services represented a broader challenge: how to ensure employees received the right care at the right time.** If TUHS could optimize employee utilization of the best and most cost-effective

healthcare, they could improve outcomes and reduce healthcare costs, which were roughly four percent of revenue and rising three to four percent each year. To reach this goal, TUHS implemented a number of strategies, including shifting to self-insurance, changing plan designs and better managing prescription costs. They also turned to Accolade to help employees and their families navigate the healthcare system more effectively.

### THE SOLUTION

#### Accolade Healthcare Navigation

TUHS began working with Accolade in mid-2015, giving 6,400 of the organization’s employees and their families — roughly 14,000 people — access to their own personal Accolade Health Assistant. Accolade Health Assistants work one-on-one with employees to support them with any healthcare or benefits question or need. They apply unique

IN THE SECOND YEAR WITH ACCOLADE, TUHS ACHIEVED:

7%

reduction in hospital admissions

11%

reduction in hospital days

2%

increase in office visits

3%

increase in generic drug dispensing

97%

client satisfaction

\$9.8

million in cost savings

training in behavior and influence sciences — and apply insights gathered by an advanced technology platform — to provide personalized service to individuals and their families.

To kick off the new benefit, TUHS launched a multi-pronged awareness campaign to promote Accolade's ability to improve the healthcare experience for employees. Communications stressed that Accolade's compassionate and knowledgeable health assistants were available to help people navigate the healthcare system, offering benefits support, care management and coordination, as well as help with daily life issues that often stand in the way of getting optimal care.

"Navigating the healthcare system is much more complex than people think, even for people who work in it," said John Lasky, Vice President and CHRO, Temple University Health System. **"Accolade serves as the gateway, helping our employees understand how to use services and getting them more actively involved in their health decisions."**

Accolade Health Assistants have been working to build supportive, trusted relationships with TUHS employees and their families in order to positively influence their care decisions, including when and where to seek treatment. Supported by a team of nurses, doctors, social workers and other specialists, Accolade Health Assistants develop highly personalized care plans that factor in not just medical conditions but life context, knowledge and emotional issues that affect healthcare decisions.

**Health Assistants are trained to pick up on cues in the conversation that indicate a need for more assistance, often of a clinical nature.** Calls that begin with a question about a benefit or provider search are regarded as opportunities to probe on the underlying issue that's driving the question. **Leveraging these discussions means Accolade can impact decisions before people enter the healthcare system — long before a claim is incurred.**

## THE RESULTS

### Strong Engagement, Cost Savings and Satisfaction

Almost at once, the relationship between Accolade and TUHS became a model in terms of shared goals, strong communications and combined efforts. The ability of Accolade Health Assistants to intervene before a situation becomes a crisis has resulted in fewer hospital admissions and better utilization of preventive care and prescription drugs, which can make a big impact on total spend.

"We signed on to Accolade because we thought it would benefit our employees, and it did," said Lasky. "In year one, we achieved close to 50 percent employee engagement and saved more than two million dollars in healthcare claims costs. In year two, those cost savings have more than quadrupled."

TUHS has achieved cost savings of \$9.8 million in service year two resulting from more efficient use of healthcare resources. Comparing TUHS results in their second Accolade service year to the pre-Accolade time period, TUHS has achieved the following outcomes:

- 7% reduction in hospital admissions
- 11% reduction in hospital days
- 1.5% reduction in avoidable emergency room visits
- 2% increase in office visits
- 1% increase in prescription drug fills
- 3% increase in generic drug dispensing

These efficiencies have enabled TUHS to reduce their per member per month medical cost trend to 0.3% on an annualized basis. At the same time, Accolade has achieved an impressive satisfaction rating of 97% among TUHS employees and their families, consistent with satisfaction ratings of other Accolade customers.

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#### What TUHS employees are saying:

*"I find the service to be very helpful. Hopefully, you can keep this type of service available to the Temple employees, because it is so much more personable than calling other insurance [companies] that are trying to get off the phone with you as quickly as they can. But, I feel that Accolade, the person actually cares about us getting better."*

*"I am an employee benefits consultant, and I've been doing benefits for over 30 years. I wish there was a way that we could get Accolade woven into the benefit regime for all people. Everybody needs an Accolade. If there was a way to do that, we would reduce the cost of spending in the U.S. measurably."*

*"My health assistant is awesome. She always goes the extra mile to help with my issues, and I have a lot of issues. I really do appreciate her help!"*

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