

# How Accolade Expert MD serves as a conduit to better care, better value for Koch Global

## BACKGROUND

Koch Global Service, a conglomerate with annual revenues of more than \$60 billion, is the second-largest privately held company in North America. With more than 50,000 employees on their health plan, and approximately 100,000 members, the company looks for point solutions that seamlessly work within their current healthcare ecosystem.

Koch came to Accolade Expert MD looking for a virtual expert medical opinion solution that would help them reduce costs and help members make more value-based decisions. The solution would also have to integrate with their medical carrier and surgical center of excellence, which they were implementing at the same time.

Success would be measured by all three working together to help members avoid unnecessary surgeries and choose the right surgeon to get the best possible outcome and lower costs.

A year after offering Accolade Expert MD, they've seen how virtual expert medical opinion can be the conduit to better care for members.



## Finding the right partner

As a large company with many subsidiaries, many health plans, and many employees in multiple areas, implementing any solution to reduce health costs and improve outcomes can be complex for Koch. But a large plan requires partners that can handle complexities and Koch needed a virtual expert opinion solution that would be able to not only work in such a complex environment, but also come on board and sit at the table with other partners such as a surgical center of excellence, which was also being onboarded at the same time.

Both partners would need to work collaboratively along with Koch's medical carrier to lower healthcare costs, increase clinical outcomes, improve member satisfaction, and ensure they received the right care. Each partner would amplify the other with the virtual expert medical opinion provider taking the lead in identifying and engaging high-risk employees.

## Starting with member- first

Koch chose Accolade Expert MD because they were able to work with Koch, their surgical center of excellence, and their medical carrier to deliver on this promise. They began developing the plan to put the member experience first even before day one.

This meant mapping out how Accolade Expert MD would provide information to the other partners and provide a cohesive and meaningful experience for the member. This included defining referral processes between Accolade Expert MD to the surgical center of excellence and medical carrier, as well as other vendors. In the end, each stakeholder works together, providing the appropriate lift and expertise to the member at the appropriate time.

Other efforts include an Accolade Expert MD data portal that clinical partners use so they have a complete view into each member's expert opinion, including records, written and other notes so the process can be shared seamlessly across partners and when working with members.

"The vendor partners really appreciate the collaboration," said Matt Hall, benefits strategy manager, Koch Global Services. "They all work together to provide a great member experience."

## Defining objectives

Once Koch had both Accolade Expert MD and a surgical center of excellence working in tandem with their medical carrier, they began to focus on rolling out the virtual expert medical opinion benefit to members. They focused on bariatric surgery and musculoskeletal procedures and implemented penalties for members who didn't have a consult with one of Accolade Expert MD's expert specialists before a procedure.

They also used Accolade Expert MD's proactive REACH program to identify and connect with individuals likely to benefit from an expert medical opinion.

### Disincentives for Certain Surgical Procedures

Koch incorporated a number of disincentives that would discourage members from going ahead with certain surgeries before having a virtual expert medical opinion:

Members must have an Accolade Expert MD expert medical consult before bariatric surgery in order to have it covered.

If an individual is considering a spine, knee or hip surgery, they must complete a virtual consult with an Accolade Expert MD expert or pay \$1,000 out-of-pocket when they have the surgery.

Koch has seen a number of benefits by implementing virtual expert medical opinions before these surgeries:

- Members have more confidence in whatever care direction they choose
- They have lowered the total number of surgeries
- Those having surgery are having them because they are medically necessary
- Those having surgery are referred to the surgical center of excellence

## REACH Predictive Analytics

Koch also uses Accolade Expert MD's REACH predictive analytics program, which analyzes claims data and identifies members who could benefit from an expert medical opinion. Accolade Expert MD uses communications and outreach specialists to touch these members and provide information about their virtual expert medical opinion benefit.

### Koch REACH Results

July 1, 2020 – July 1, 2021

- **3,561** members identified as qualified
- **26%** of qualified members touched
- **28%** of members were transferred to a nurse
- **67%** of members that were transferred to a nurse completed a virtual expert medical opinion

*"We've seen 20 percent of our savings come from the REACH program," said Matt Hall, benefits strategy manager, Koch Global Services. "It's a good way to reach people who need it, when they need it."*

## What is REACH?

REACH is Accolade Expert MD's comprehensive, proactive outreach program that engages members who are on the path to a high-cost or high-impact medical event before it happens.

We use a best-in-class predictive algorithm to analyze claims history, surgical prior authorization requests, age, and gender to create a prioritized list of individuals scored according to risk level and by major diagnostic category.

Our in-house team of health advocates use this information to connect to these high-risk members about the opportunity to speak to one of the nation's leading specialists for an expert second opinion. An email educates members about virtual expert medical opinions, their plan design, and incentive, or penalty offers before they receive a call so they are more likely to be ready to speak to our trained staff.

This comprehensive solution uses data to put our team in touch with members just when they need information and is a helping hand to make a difference.

*"It's like having a medical expert right at your fingertips. You have a concern, you grab your phone, and you're able to engage immediately," said Hall. "It gives people a lot of hope and confidence that they're on the right track with their medical care."*

*– Matt Hall, benefits strategy manager, Koch Global Services.*

## The results

Koch has been pleased with Accolade Expert MD for their ability to solve their business challenge by working with their clinical programs and delivering on superior member service. The ability to help people when they are considering surgery or another challenging diagnosis is one that makes financial sense for the company and is helpful for the member. They've received positive feedback from members after speaking with Accolade Expert MD experts and those that have been contacted through the REACH program.

With many employees and dependents living across the United States, Koch has seen an unexpected benefit to its rural members. Many of these members don't have access to specialists, and now can receive a consult with the best in the country through Accolade Expert MD.

Over a 12-month period, Koch has averaged 77 virtual expert medical opinion consults a month. Of those, 74 percent were related to a previous surgical recommendation from their local provider.

In addition, during the first year, Koch experienced:

- **\$4,433,952** in total cost savings
- **\$4,895** savings per virtual expert medical opinion
- **11%** surgical avoidance rate  
(Compared to our BOB is around 29%)
- **72%** improved treatment plans  
(Our BOB is around 82%)
- **18%** alternative diagnoses proposed  
(Our BOB is around 33%)

## About Accolade Expert MD

Working collaboratively with clients to help solve their problems with virtual expert opinions is what Accolade Expert MD does best. The preferred solution for many Fortune 500 employers, we are here to help you offer virtual expert medical opinions while reaping the benefits of our extraordinary service and +91 NPS score.

Accolade Expert MD connects members to physician specialists for an expert medical opinion when they have questions about a chronic illness, upcoming surgery, or treatment plan. We make the process easier, more convenient and significantly more human. Our team coordinates all record and medical information with the specialist. Members speak to the physician within a matter of days and receive a written report within 24 hours of their consultation.

To learn more about  
Accolade Expert MD and how  
we can help you supercharge  
your goals, please contact  
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