



How health plans drive virtual care utilization to achieve better health outcomes

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It's pretty simple. You won't use something if you don't know you have it. It's been reported that more than half of all benefits recipients in America claim that they don't fully understand their benefits, resulting in reduced utilization and poorer health outcomes. In fact, the National Business Group on Health called member engagement the second-biggest challenge facing benefit leaders today. So how do we drive members to better use innovative health solutions, like virtual care, that are available to them?

For leading health plans, like Blue Shield of California, a commitment to solving the engagement gap has changed the way it uses virtual care to reach its members. More than ever before, the focus is on building a bridge between the real day-to-day needs of members and the high-quality 24/7 solutions that are available to address their health concerns.

50%+

of all people don't fully understand their healthcare benefits

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Here are three ways health plans and virtual care providers are working to better engage their members:

1. **Create an integrated experience**

Members need health insurance providers to meet them where they are. This means addressing members' health concerns and questions across fully insured and self-insured populations with contextually relevant messages about available services and their eligibility. Whether it's welcome kits, member portals, mobile apps, digital communication, or websites, it's essential to integrate key messages into a member's daily life. That awareness of "virtual care" then becomes even more impactful when members also understand the value, quality, and convenience of 24/7 access to a board-certified physician and the ability to connect with one in the next few minutes. For Blue Shield of California (BSC), this level of integration is seamless and realized across experiences.

"BSC is working with Teladoc Health on multiple fronts to increase member engagement including mobile app integration, developing member material to reflect BSC's brand strategy, and expansion of services including modules such as behavioral health and dermatology," notes David Goldberg, director of product line evolution for BSC. "We're also able to increase member engagement by educating our account management and sales teams on the value proposition of quality virtual care. This has been a major point of emphasis in training and internal product promotional efforts."

Before members seek care, and especially at the point of need when they begin looking for it, inserting reminders of what they are eligible for and helping them understand the advantages of new ways to access care is powerful.

2. Drive repeat utilization with multiple clinical services

Data shows that members who successfully use one clinical service drive utilization by expecting the same success with additional clinical services. For example, a member who first uses virtual care for the flu is more likely to seek help from the same source for her son's rash, for her toddler's ear infection, and possibly even for guidance about her husband's cancer diagnosis. When members can access all of their care for general medical needs, dermatology, and behavioral health from the same source, they average about five times as many visits as members who have access to just one of these services, or members who must use one source for dermatology, another for a fever, and a third for behavioral health.

3. Communicate. Communicate. Then communicate again.

Consider the business traveler caught out of town with the flu, the family member evacuated from a natural disaster, or the new father seeking answers about a child's fever. Meet members with the right messages at the right time. In the spring, focus on seasonal allergies. In the fall and winter, provide information on preparing children for back-to-school and flu season. In the summer, engage employees on getting care while traveling.

The key is data-driven contextualization. Think about all the messages a consumer is receiving each day. To successfully break through and have the message of virtual care "stick," it cannot be generic, but rather it must be contextualized; offering an accessible solution to a real concern that they are currently facing. As a result of a partnered, data-driven approach, health insurance providers are seeing higher response rates and utilization with eligibility awareness campaigns and even seasonal reminders.

When Blue Shield of California (BSC) was choosing a virtual care partner that millions of its members could potentially use, it understood that it could engage more members if its virtual care partner was willing and able to innovate around healthcare and utilization. "We saw Teladoc Health as a pioneer and industry trendsetter in virtual care, and envisioned them as a conduit to help carry out our mission to bring affordable, quality healthcare to all Californians," adds David Goldberg. By partnering with the Teladoc Health member engagement team, BSC more than tripled its utilization of telehealth services from 2017 to 2018.

Members need high-quality, cost-effective care they can count on. With an integrated communications plan, health plans are increasing engagement, driving utilization, and leading members toward better outcomes. We're all more likely to use something that we know we have, especially when it's something that can add tremendous value to our lives.

Proven methods to solve the engagement gap:



Building a bridge
to the day-to-day
needs of members



Providing high-quality
24/7 solutions

Blue Shield of California's 2018 results after deploying Teladoc Health's multi-touch engagement strategy:

3.8x

ASO utilization
2017-2018

+38K

unique users in 2018

+90%

member satisfaction

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About Teladoc Health

Teladoc Health is the global virtual care leader, helping millions of people resolve their healthcare needs with confidence. Together with our clients and partners, we are continually modernizing the healthcare experience and making high-quality healthcare a reality for more people and organizations around the world.