



# Advocating for members throughout their health care journey

Advocacy solutions designed to anticipate potential health needs while helping members make more informed health care decisions.

Navigating the health care system—whether it’s a short hospital stay or managing an ongoing condition—can be confusing and time-consuming for employees and their families.

It’s something Christie Anderson, who used to work as a UnitedHealthcare advocate, understands firsthand. She helped to solve some of the more stressful situations for employees. For example, Anderson received an emotional call from a member who was delaying care due to a misunderstanding. He thought he was going to temporarily lose coverage as he transitioned from his employer plan to Medicare for retirement.

To help clear up the confusion, Anderson reached out to his employer’s human resources department, serving as a bridge to assist the member, who also did not speak English as a first language. Then she contacted the provider to schedule the appointment for him.

“The end-to-end care was so important. He didn’t know where to start. He was really grateful,” says Anderson, who now works as a consumer affairs specialist at UnitedHealthcare.

UnitedHealthcare uses a multi-pronged Advocacy approach to help employees navigate the health system. Advocates can go beyond basic benefit and claims questions and offer employers the data and insights needed to evolve their benefit plans especially when an employer integrates medical coverage with pharmacy, behavioral and specialty benefits.

This approach has become even more important as employers seek to retain and attract talent in a competitive job market by offering more robust and personalized benefits.

As part of the member experience, Advocacy solutions are designed to deliver:

- **Proactive guidance through data and insights**
- **Compassionate, empathetic service in every interaction**
- **Simplified experiences by streamlining the benefits experience**



**“Advocacy moving forward will continue to be a priority for employers of all sizes to support the unique needs of their employees.”**

**Rebecca Madsen**

Chief Executive Officer  
Advocacy  
UnitedHealthcare Employer & Individual

# Compassionate, empathetic service in every interaction

Support offered through the Advocacy solutions UnitedHealthcare offers starts early in a member's health journey, with proactive onboarding beginning during plan enrollment. It helps set members up for success by evaluating whether their usual providers are network or out-of-network (OON). Medications are also reviewed for any comparable lower-cost alternatives based on their plan.

For additional support, advocates use predictive personalization to help connect employees to the most appropriate resources when they call. Advocates are available through the phone, live chat, email or text.

Advocates go beyond customer service, providing whole-person guidance across a broad number of health care needs, such as mental health, clinical and complex care support, financial and benefits/claims. They use a dashboard that offers a comprehensive view of the member, including their current health

condition, history of calls, utilization of [myuhc.com](https://myuhc.com)<sup>®</sup> and the UnitedHealthcare<sup>®</sup> app, utilization of the health system, clinical recommendations and health account information.

"Being able to quickly view the information for an HRA or FSA account, give more referral options more quickly and easily, and update communication methods very easily has been greatly appreciated by the UnitedHealthcare representatives on the floor," says Sammi Flentje, a supervisor in the UnitedHealthcare Enhanced Advocacy program.

Proactive outreach by advocates can include instances where members receive prior authorization requests for certain identified clinical codes for treatments or surgeries. Knowing those certain treatments and surgeries are often accompanied by ensuing claims for durable medical equipment (DME), medication and follow-up care, the advocate can begin to help provide

# 12M+

members served by  
Advocacy solutions offered  
through UnitedHealthcare

information to the member proactively to help steer them to quality, lower-cost options for those items and services they may need in the future.

"When a lot of people think of advocacy, they're thinking customer service and call center support," says Geoff Bushman, product director of Advocacy for UnitedHealthcare Employer & Individual. "But the overall goal of advocacy is to help guide members to make better decisions."

## Next-level Advocacy: Elite and Premier

UnitedHealthcare offers Enhanced Advocacy with Elite and Premier service and support models that currently cover more than 3.5 million members. These Enhanced Advocacy levels feature dedicated representatives for employee populations who can provide more personalized interactions.

Elite and Premier Advocacy has been proven to help lower the total cost of care and resulted in better clinical outcomes for members. This approach involves:

- Leveraging data from medical claims to catch chronic conditions sooner
- Finding and addressing gaps in care
- Identifying clinically effective treatments
- Looking for lower-cost alternatives for medications
- Seeking opportunities for better health and lower costs

Employers who have engaged Enhanced Advocacy services have seen:<sup>2</sup>

- 23% increase in clinical program enrollment
- 12% fewer inpatient days
- 3% higher utilization of lower cost sites of care



# 2-4%

average medical cost saved  
for employers enrolled in  
Enhanced Advocacy models<sup>1</sup>

## Integrating benefits to help simplify the member experience

Supported by teams skilled in health care delivery, UnitedHealthcare’s end-to-end ownership of a whole-health portfolio—from health care benefits to care providers —helps to deliver integrated solutions for a simpler member experience.

Integrated medical benefits with specialty (dental, vision and financial protection), pharmacy and behavioral may create opportunities to diagnose and manage chronic conditions sooner, help identify and deploy clinically effective treatments, intervene early in behavioral issues and more.

Chronic conditions are the leading causes of death and disability in the U.S.—driving \$3.8 trillion in annual health care costs.<sup>3</sup> And it’s estimated that unaddressed mental health issues such as depression and anxiety cost the U.S. economy \$1 trillion in lost productivity each year.<sup>4</sup>

Integrated benefits also bolster advocacy efforts in helping to create adherence to medical and cost decision-making to help drive greater engagement. In fact, 39% of clinical program enrollees are referred by advocates.<sup>5</sup>

“Given that health care is the second largest expense for employers after salaries, companies have been looking for innovative ways to better support the health and well-being of their employees,” Madsen says.

**“Advocacy takes all the pieces of the health care ecosystem and knits them together in a way that delivers the best experience for the member and value for the client.”**

**Rebecca Madsen**

Chief Executive Officer  
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# Enhancing tools to meet changing member needs

Keeping the member at the center also means continually making enhancements so that tools and resources are easier to use. From a member's perspective, this includes closing the loop when they've reached out for help or proactively providing timely information about a health or financial decision.

Another significant consideration is an increase in behavioral health issues as people struggle with stress and unexpected pressure due to the pandemic. More than half of consumers reported their mental health was affected during the pandemic.<sup>6</sup> To help address this situation, UnitedHealthcare created a dedicated Behavioral Health Advocacy team with resources to help guide members to the care they need. Enhanced Advocacy models have dedicated nurse pods for behavioral health.

"We have the tools to help employees be more resilient ranging from self-help to in-person treatment," says Trevor Porath, vice president of behavioral health solutions for UnitedHealthcare Employer & Individual. "We also want to be able to identify those who may need support sooner before it becomes a crisis. Our low severity solutions help employees build coping mechanisms for their stress and anxiety."

In addition to recognizing the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on mental health, another area to address for employees is how **social determinants of health** such as social support and income impact well-being of employees. After all, research showed that while the quality of clinical care accounts for about 20% of overall positive health, social determinants of health such as employment, family and social support, and community safety drive approximately 80% of health outcomes.<sup>7</sup>

Using predictive analytics to provide behind-the-scenes intelligence, UnitedHealthcare is able to identify employees who may be in need of support and proactively offer them help.

When an identified member calls in, the advocate receiving their call gets an alert, helping them to engage with the member and connect them to helpful resources and programs. If the identified member visits [myuhc.com](https://myuhc.com), their personalized homepage offers recommendations that guide them to the resources and support they may need.

"Your health is one of the most important things in your life," Madsen says. "So we need to be attuned to the unique situations members may be facing and give our Advocacy teams the tools to help members more easily find the care and support they need."

Learn more

Contact your broker, consultant or UnitedHealthcare representative or visit [uhc.com/broker-consultant](https://uhc.com/broker-consultant) and [uhc.com/employer](https://uhc.com/employer)

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<sup>1</sup> 2019-2020 UnitedHealthcare employer study including 387 clients, 4.8M members and \$19.2B in medical spend. Analysis completed on a continuous medical enrollment basis. Medical costs risk adjusted for age and gender. Value impact based on comparing clients by the adoption platform features vs. not (e.g., enhanced vs. Core advocacy). Actual client results may vary based on specific clinical programs the client has or maturity of implementation.

<sup>2</sup> 2021 Performance reporting, comparing enhanced advocacy members (Elite/Premier) to Advocate4Me members.

<sup>3</sup> Chronic Diseases in America. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Page last reviewed Jan. 12, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization. Mental Health in the Workplace: Information Sheet. Accessed May 12, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> UnitedHealthcare Advocate4Me performance reporting, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation Tracking Poll, July 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Patient health and wellness: What's a ZIP code got to do with it," Wolters Kluwer, Jan. 13, 2021.

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