



# A more engaging approach to behavioral health

Helping employees engage with their behavioral health benefits may help make a difference in addressing the mental health crisis.

There is currently a mental health crisis in the U.S., according to 90% of Americans surveyed, and that crisis is spilling into the workplace.<sup>1</sup> A 2024 survey found that:<sup>2</sup>

- 7 in 10 employees said their mental health has stayed the same or worsened in the past year
- 61% reported feeling down, depressed or hopeless
- 8 in 10 said they have recently struggled with nervousness, anxiousness and stress

Struggling with mental health can lead to decreased productivity and motivation at work.<sup>3</sup>

To break down the impact on employers even further, approximately 12B working days are lost annually due to common mental health issues, costing the global economy \$1T each year.<sup>4</sup>

These staggering statistics are the reason many employers are looking to expand their behavioral health offerings. In fact, 77% of employers said they plan to offer mental health support to their employees.<sup>5</sup>

Even if employers offer behavioral health benefits, some employees may not utilize them. That's why it's important for employers to build awareness and seek solutions to keep employees engaged with their benefits.



# 12B

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# \$1T

**cost of lost working days on the global economy<sup>4</sup>**

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Healthcare**

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# Identifying opportunities to better engage employees

A lack of awareness and understanding often prevents employees from getting the most out of what's available to them. In fact, more than half of Americans surveyed said they don't fully understand what their current health plan offers.<sup>6</sup>

Examples of what some employees may say include:

**“I don't know where to start, so it's easier to ignore my mental health.”**

**“I don't know exactly what I'm feeling, so I'll wait until I have symptoms and then I'll react.”**

**“My experience often feels disconnected — in person, on the phone, online and within apps.”**

Employers can play a crucial role in helping drive awareness and education around the health benefits they offer, as well as encouraging and empowering their employees to leverage what's available to them.

In fact, two-thirds of employees surveyed said they want their employer to provide better and more consistent benefit education throughout the year.<sup>7</sup> This is especially important in the mental health space.

Additionally, 1 in 4 Americans surveyed reported needing mental health care or medication but not receiving it.<sup>1</sup> Although cost is one of the most cited reasons why people forgo care or medication, stigma and access are other common explanations.<sup>1</sup>

Understanding that mental health can be a sensitive topic for employers to address with employees, UnitedHealthcare has made a concerted effort to help engage and guide members to care through targeted communications, campaigns and initiatives—collaborating with employers, brokers and consultants to tackle the challenges that matter most to their unique group populations.

**UnitedHealthcare worked with employers on 3 recent campaigns\* designed to drive greater awareness and understanding of the various behavioral health solutions available to employees.**

\*Success stories are based on National Account clients who have worked with the UnitedHealthcare Engagement Solutions team.



# Targeted communications to help families address youth mental health concerns

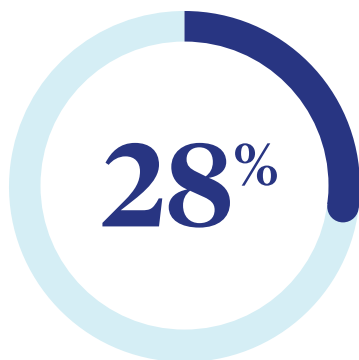
Roughly 1 in 5 U.S. youth ages 6 to 17 experience a mental health disorder each year, yet only about 20% of those receive care from a provider.<sup>7</sup>

Recognizing that it can be difficult for parents to focus at work if they have a child at home who is struggling, one employer engaged UnitedHealthcare to address this gap within their workforce.

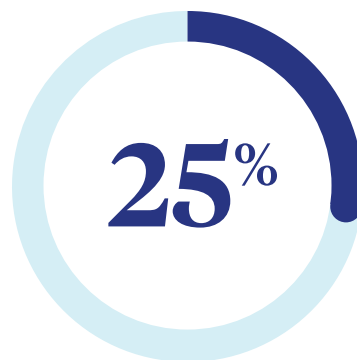
Together with support from UnitedHealthcare, a custom mental health home mailer was created—with messaging relevant for employees who are parents of children with mental health concerns—to help raise awareness of youth mental health issues and drive better utilization of mental health benefits.

This also included providing tools—built to help remove the stigma of mental health and encourage parents to have compassionate, open conversations with their children—such as conversation starters, a QR code with online resources and tear-off cards for easy access to the employee assistance program (EAP).

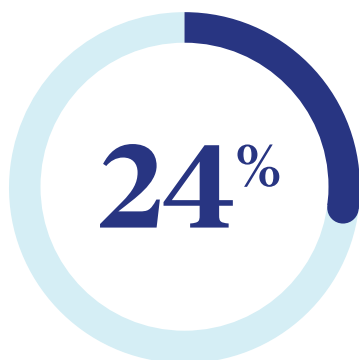
## The results



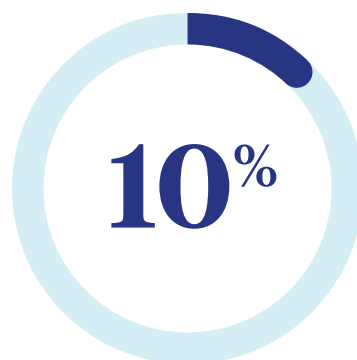
Increase in claims for anxiety



Increase in monthly behavioral health claims for members ages 5 to 17



Increase in claims for depression



Increase in ADHD/autism claims



**“Behavioral health can be a difficult subject for employers to address with their employees. We’ve taken some of the onus off them by engaging their employees more directly via the UnitedHealthcare brand to provide support, guidance and awareness of the behavioral health benefits available to them.”**

**Kelley Thomes Ries**

Vice President of Member Marketing  
UnitedHealthcare Employer & Individual



# An interactive way to engage employees and members

A manufacturer tapped UnitedHealthcare to help reduce the mental health stigma within its workforce and increase awareness of its core mental health benefit offerings.

In response, a “Trivia Time” campaign was launched for Mental Health Awareness Month. Here’s how it worked: Employees answered 6 questions aimed at testing their knowledge on mental health while learning about the mental health support available to them and their dependents through their benefits. After that, employees could enter a drawing for their choice of an Amazon.com Gift Card\* or an Apple Watch®.

## The results

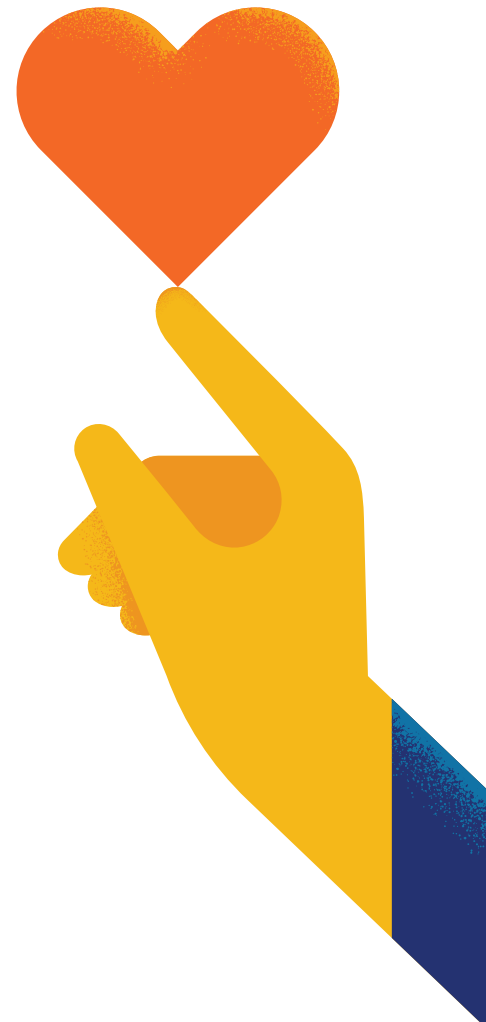


# Reaching members where they are

Struggling to get its employees to engage with their EAP—even after increasing the number of counseling visits covered by the EAP—an employer turned to UnitedHealthcare for guidance.

Realizing that many employees were unaware of the program or how to access it when in need, UnitedHealthcare collaborated with this employer to send employees and their families a mailer featuring an informational tear-off card. This card could be detached and inserted into employees’ wallets for easier access. They also hung posters with the tear-off cards in heavily trafficked work locations.

## The results



\* Amazon.com Gift Card is a trademark of Amazon.com, Inc. or its affiliates. Amazon.com is not a sponsor of this promotion. Restrictions apply, see amazon.com/go-legal.



# Maintaining engagement through guided digital experiences

In order for a campaign to be successful, it must be paired with a simple, easy-to-navigate experience.

In order to reach Millennials and younger generations who make up the majority of the U.S. workforce, using digital platforms like social media, email or apps will become increasingly important. Plus, beyond a single campaign or communication, they want to feel supported and guided through each step of their care journey.

That's why UnitedHealthcare continues to make significant enhancements to its digital behavioral health care experience. The goal is to route members to a guided, interactive and personalized experience—with recommendations for certain resources, tools or programs based on their unique needs—when they click a link within an email or scan a QR code.

For instance, while “psychiatrist” may be a top search term, a member may not need that level of care. In fact, it is estimated that approximately 50% of members seeking mental health support could be good candidates for virtual behavioral coaching as an alternative to therapy.<sup>8</sup> Ensuring members are navigated to the most appropriate care may help lower costs for them and their employer.

Working with employers, brokers and consultants to better



understand each population's unique behavioral health needs and challenges has enabled UnitedHealthcare to reach the right members at the right time with personalized care recommendations. That matters—because it's helping employees take better care of their and their families' overall health and well-being so that they can bring their best selves to work.

## 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> Lopes, L., Kirzinger, A., Sparks, G., Stokes, M., Brodie, M. KFF/CNN Mental Health in America Survey. Kaiser Family Foundation, Oct. 5, 2022. Available: <https://www.kff.org/report-section/kff-cnn-mental-health-in-america-survey-findings/>.

<sup>2</sup> 2024 Voice of the Workplace Report. CALM Business, 2024. Available: <https://business.calm.com/resources/guides/2024-voice-of-the-workplace-report/>.

<sup>3</sup> Mental Health and Productivity. Psychology Today. Available: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/productivity/mental-health-and-productivity>.

<sup>4</sup> Mental health at work. World Health Organization, Sept. 28, 2022. Available: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-at-work>. Accessed: Apr. 18, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> The State of Employee Mental Health in an Uncertain World. Based on a commissioned survey conducted by Forrester Consulting. Modern Health, Sept. 2022. Available: [https://join.modernhealth.com/rs/783-103/images/Employee\\_Mental\\_Health\\_Uncertain\\_World\\_Forrester\\_Modern\\_Health\\_2022\\_Report.pdf](https://join.modernhealth.com/rs/783-103/images/Employee_Mental_Health_Uncertain_World_Forrester_Modern_Health_2022_Report.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> 2022 Health Insurance Knowledge Snapshot. Commissioned by Justworks and conducted by Harris Poll, June 2022. Available: <https://www.justworks.com/lp/benefits-knowledge-snapshot>.

<sup>7</sup> Improving access to children's mental health care. CDC. Available: <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/access.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Based on AbleTo's Jan – Dec 2023 analysis of member onboarding data, coaching has shown to be a fit for nearly 50% of a plan population seeking mental health support. (n=31,455).

These case studies are true but identifying characteristics have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Savings calculated on book-of-business case rate savings for these programs. Savings for enrolled members are case specific. Results will vary based on client specific demographics and plan design.

The material provided through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is for informational purposes only. EAP staff cannot diagnose problems or suggest treatment. EAP is not a substitute for your doctor's care. Employees are encouraged to discuss with their doctor how the information provided may be right for them. Your health information is kept confidential in accordance with the law. EAP is not an insurance program and may be discontinued at any time. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against UnitedHealthcare or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and its components may not be available in all states or for all group sizes and is subject to change. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.

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