

Case study



Taking an innovative approach to meeting employees where they are with an on-site health center

Company: **Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas**

Industry: **Government**

Location: **Kansas City, KS**

Number of employees: **2,300**



During its 20-year-plus relationship with UnitedHealthcare, the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, has pushed itself to think bigger when it comes to the health and well-being of its employees and the community it serves.

Situation

- Wanted to create a healthier community and work environment
- Experienced a 50% increase in cost per visit to high-cost specialists and a 30% increase in emergency room use
- Needed to reduce costs and help employees make more informed health care decisions

Action

- Worked with UnitedHealthcare and a national on-site clinic partner to launch a health and well-being program called “Road to Wellness”
- Renovated and repurposed a formerly vacant local building into a dedicated employee health center
- Expanded the employee health center from an on-site health clinic to include a pharmacy and, most recently, a full-service workout facility, with funding provided by UnitedHealthcare

Results

↑ **8%**

increase of employees who used the employee health center clinic from 2021 to 2022

↑ **6.4%**

more actively engaged employees among those who used the employee health center in 2022 compared to those who didn't

↓ **5.5%**

lower emergency room use among those who used the employee health center in 2022 compared to those who didn't



There for what matters™

Setting a healthier example

The Unified Government “UG” of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, has a lot of love for its employees and the wider community it serves. And it goes both ways: Its union, civilian and sworn employees are devoted to the UG and their community with up to 5 generations of family members working for the UG.

“I think our employees have a sense of pride about working here because we live in the community that we serve,” says Renee Ramirez, human resources director at the UG.

Serving a county consistently ranked as one of the least healthy in the state,¹ the UG knew that improving the health and well-being of its community had to start from within.

Identifying the challenges

Beginning initially in 2011, the UG leaned on its long-tenured relationship with UnitedHealthcare to collaborate on establishing a culture of health and well-being, with the aim of also reducing health care costs.

In reviewing claims data and listening to employees in the first couple of years, 2 points became clear: The UG needed to make it more convenient for employees to manage their health and well-being, and it needed to support them in making more informed, cost-effective care decisions.

“The claims we paid were oftentimes driven by how our employees were using the health system—or by employees not taking full advantage of the benefits we offered them,” Ramirez explains. “So we wanted to make sure our employees took ownership of their health by offering them convenience and low out-of-pocket costs.”

Building a “Road to Wellness”

To increase awareness and engagement with its employees, the UG established a health and well-being program called “Road to Wellness.” While this program included collaborating with UnitedHealthcare to distribute materials, host benefit fairs and provide education around different benefits and programs, the UG wanted to take it a step further.

In 2014, the UG started making plans to open an employee health center. Leveraging the strategic relationships UnitedHealthcare has with health care administrators, the UG secured internal leadership support and purchased a 10,000-square-foot building that had lain vacant in the community for several years. This became the home to the Road to Wellness Employee Health Center.

“We wanted employees to see that the decisions they make have a direct impact on their health and that they are in the driver’s seat of their own health and well-being,” Ramirez says.

Located within 2 blocks of the UG’s central campus, the Road to Wellness Employee Health Center features an on-site clinic currently managed and staffed by Marathon Health, where employees, spouses and dependents have access to a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner and medical assistant. An on-site pharmacy facility is managed by A-S Meds to fill prescriptions at cost and further drive usage of the health center.

On top of delivering on the convenience employees were seeking, the clinic has also worked to close gaps in care and help employees make more informed decisions that have resulted in better health outcomes and lower costs.

 **15.5%**

lower emergency room use among those who used the employee health center

Moving forward

While the UG has experienced great success with the Road to Wellness Employee Health Center over several years, the team is looking at what’s next.

For example, the UG recently added a fitness center that was funded through wellness dollars made available through UnitedHealthcare. “Employees come up to me and say, ‘This is all for us?’” Ramirez says. “They can’t believe it.”

Over the last few years, the center has become integral to the UG’s health benefits strategy—and even its ability to retain generations of employees—and Ramirez and team look forward to continuing to work with UnitedHealthcare and Marathon Health to drive higher engagement with the center, with ambitions of increasing the number of employees engaged in the center to 80%.

“Our employee health center was a way to show that we’re really serious about the wellness of our employees. We value them, and we want them to work here, because the healthier they become, the better we are able to serve the citizens of Wyandotte County,” Ramirez says.

¹ Wyandotte, KS. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. Available: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/kansas/wyandotte>. Accessed: Aug, 2023.

This case study is true. 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. Results will vary depending on the state where the insured policy is issued and the amount of engagement by employees.

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