Community Health Navigators Address Social Determinants of Health to Impact High Hospital Utilization

It is well known that access to proper health care alone is not enough to ensure improved health outcomes. While deficiencies in the health care system contribute to about 10 percent of total mortality rates, health-risk behaviors and social determinants of health (SDOH) like education, racial segregation, lack of social supports, and poverty account for more than half of premature deaths in the United States every year. These SDOH yield a high-utilizer population who receive lower-quality care and suffer from poorer health outcomes than their counterparts who have fewer psychosocial barriers.

AmeriHealth Caritas leverages its community care management teams led by a medical director and consisting of community health navigators, community care managers, and a program manager to engage high- and emerging-risk members to increase their access to care and improve their overall health care experience through care management services delivered in member homes, with an emphasis in screening for and addressing SDOH. This person-centered, trauma-informed strategy to screen for and address SDOH for members has been adopted by our Medicaid managed care organizations serving six states and the District of Columbia.

Our SDOH survey data demonstrated our success in identifying and addressing specific SDOH vulnerabilities at both the population and member levels. High-risk members engaged with community-based services had more SDOH vulnerabilities, like health literacy, transportation to medical facilities, and food insecurity than those not engaged with these services.

The provision of community-based services resulted in marked reductions in acute utilization from baseline in the engaged population.

**HEALTH CARE INEQUITIES**
- 18% differential between low- and high-income earners reporting financial barriers hindering them from accessing necessary health care services.

**HEALTH CARE COSTS**
- 5% of the U.S. population account for 50% of total health care expenditures.

**HEALTH CARE REPUTATION**
- 11th place U.S. ranking in health care system performance among other high-income countries.

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- **26.3%** inpatient (IP) admissions.*
- **27.2%** IP days.*
- **9.7%** emergency room (ER) visits.*

**HEALTH CARE INEQUITIES**

**HEALTH CARE COSTS**

**HEALTH CARE REPUTATION**

**SOURCES:**
5. Standardized SDOH screening is conducted via an enterprise-wide member survey (n=120,000) adapted from the validated PRAPARE tool (National Association of Community Health Centers; Bethesda, MD). The survey assesses the member’s unmet SDOH needs across five domains: education; health literacy; transportation (medical and non-medical); housing; and material security (i.e., food, utilities, child care, clothing, phone, and household needs). For every plan, the member’s survey response to each SDOH status query was risk-stratified as “declined,” “stable,” “vulnerable,” and “crisis” (housing only) for every domain and subdomain.

* Calculated from neighbor group and prior year per four lines of business.

**SDOH:** Social Determinants of Health

**PRAPARE:** Pre-Avoidable Preventable Avoidable Readmissions and Emergency Department Visits