



Chronic Disease **MANAGEMENT**

**Creating customized solutions
and engagement to reduce
costs and improve health**



When a company in Illinois partnered with HMC HealthWorks, we started as we always do: with full health screenings for every plan participant. That's how we identified a 44-year-old woman—we'll call her Celeste¹—who was struggling with high blood sugar, obesity, and high blood pressure.

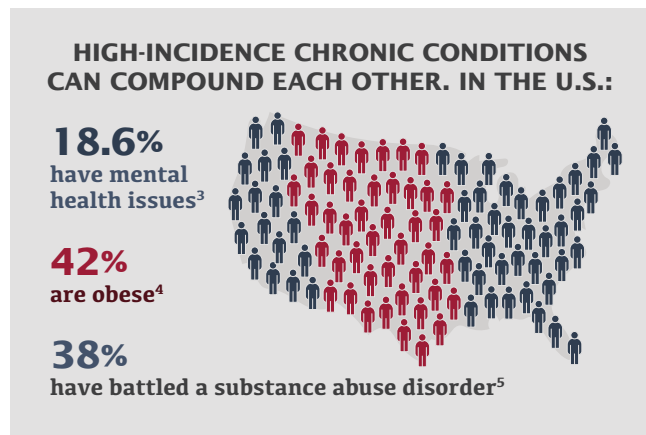


Celeste's condition is typical of the challenges companies and their health plan participants face. The vast majority of health costs—90%—are driven by chronic issues.² And when such issues aren't addressed, they typically become more complex and more difficult and expensive to treat. That also happens with mental health issues, which can lead to unhealthy behaviors such as overeating and substance abuse, which in turn may fuel even costlier and more debilitating health problems such as diabetes and heart disease.

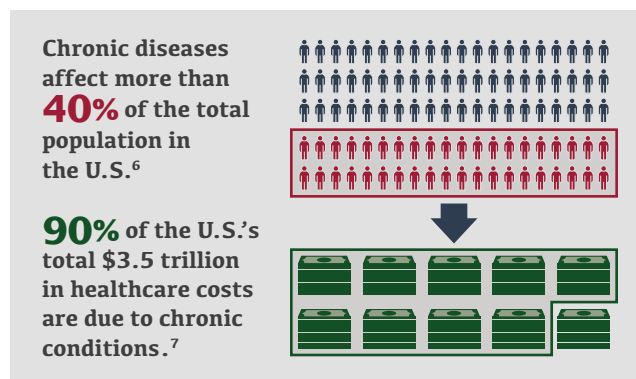
with our trained staff, Celeste was able to lose 79 pounds and reduce both her A1c levels and blood pressure. She has been able to stop taking some medications entirely and reduced others.

Not only is Celeste happier—"I feel great and had to purchase a new wardrobe, since nothing fits! I am motivated to continue toward my weight loss goal"—but she's also reducing costs to her company by staying healthy and productive, and avoiding expensive, debilitating chronic health problems.

We know that businesses want workers to be happy, healthy, and productive. It's better for everyone, and it's less expensive. Chronic diseases can make this difficult. To manage the chronic disease challenge, we first need to understand it.



When these challenges occur within the participant network of your health plan, costs can rise quickly, and the problem can seem overwhelming. But the good news is that we have ways to address these problems.



In Celeste's case, her challenges put her into a high-risk category, so we started by working with her to identify goals. She wanted to get off her medication, reduce her A1c levels, and lose weight. Through coaching, diet education, and personal engagement

1 All participants' names and identifying characteristics have been changed.
 2 <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/costs/index.htm>
 3 <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/mental-health-america-adult-data#two>
 4 <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>
 5 <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/addiction-statistics>
 6 <https://www.chronicdisease.org/page/whyweneedph2imphc>
 7 <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/costs/index.htm>

CARE STORIES

Working with the Whole Person

A 36-year-old man wanted to reduce his high blood pressure. We worked to help him lose weight. He added more activity during the day, then began to avoid added sugars and processed foods, working with his wife to manage his diet. He's lost 64 pounds, reduced his triglycerides, and no longer needs to take blood pressure medication. "I feel good," he says. "I'm going to continue working in wellness because I have improved so much!"



WHERE THE CHALLENGES COME

"While some high healthcare costs stem from car accidents, cancer, and other episodic causes, most of the folks generating high costs are dealing with some form of chronic condition," explains Dr. Janis DiMonaco, president and CEO of HMC HealthWorks. "These are ongoing medical situations. And what we've done is overlay our suite of capabilities." We use sophisticated data analysis to determine where your company's healthcare costs are highest, what interventions will most effectively reduce them, and who needs these interventions. We learn about the specific chronic disease challenges your company faces. While every workplace may not be dealing with every chronic condition, all workplaces will have at least some of them, DiMonaco says. The populations we manage vary depending on location, workplace, and age of workers, so we have experience with a wide range of chronic challenges.




Conditions we address:

HYPERTENSION & HYPERLIPIDEMIA
STRESS
OBESITY
CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD)
DEPRESSION
CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE
DIABETES
HEART FAILURE
SLEEP APNEA
ASTHMA
CHRONIC BACK PAIN

LOOKING AT THE WHOLE PERSON

A wide array of chronic conditions can affect participants, but we don't look at these participants and see just the condition. Addressing these issues is done most effectively by looking at the whole person, so we can get at the root causes and create real change. Connecting personally also allows us to communicate, increasing the effectiveness of any treatments while also identifying other issues we can help with. "If someone is a high-risk diabetic with coronary disease and depression, often the depression is the root cause," says John Neal, chief growth officer of HMC HealthWorks. "If you don't deal with the depression, you're not probably going to have very much impact on their medical costs. We believe in managing the risk, not just the condition."

Our Philosophy

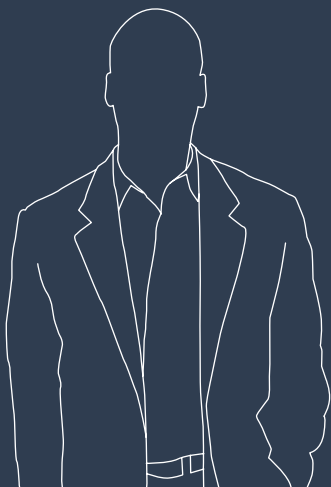
-  Target the "whole person," not just the condition.
-  Focus on educating people about their chronic conditions and closing gaps in their care.
-  Start by determining the medical and mental health status of a participant, and create a personalized care plan that can be shared with their primary care physician.

CARE STORIES

Working with a Wellness Coach

A 47-year-old man was targeted for heart-disease prevention. He hadn't been in touch with a medical provider and wasn't taking needed medication for an extended period. We had a Nurse Health Advocate reach out to him, build a connection, and start working with him on his health. As a result, he's now meeting with a healthcare provider and taking his medication. On top of that, he's lost weight, reduced his total cholesterol and his triglycerides, and increased his HDL.

But perhaps the most encouraging news is his attitude: "When I first started this coaching thing, I thought it was a big pain," he says. "But I recognize it has really helped me. I now have goals that I want to reach before my coach calls. This program makes me want to do better. It makes me accountable."



CONNECTING WITH PARTICIPANTS: COACHING AND COMMUNICATION

What does working with the whole person in a person-first, data-intensive, integrated way look like when you zoom out and apply it to your whole workplace population? If we see that 70% of your company's healthcare costs are driven by people with diabetes, we don't just work on medication costs (though we also do that). We connect with the people.

"Disease management is all about outreach to the individual and making sure that they understand their condition, and engaging them in their healthcare," Neal says. That's where our health coaches come in. They have been trained in a wellness coach program provided by Harvard Medical School. They help to manage demand by supporting, educating, navigating, and advocating for a participant.

"The evidence is that when someone is fully informed and supported, they tend to make decisions that result in lower healthcare costs," Neal says. That underscores the importance of attending to medical problems before they get out of control. Our coaches do this not only by knowing what's happening clinically with participants, but also by connecting with them personally. "That's how you're going to get change," Neal points out. "Someone may be on the list for coaching because they are a high-risk diabetic, and it may take two calls from a coach before they start talking about their diabetes. But the Nurse Health Advocates will persist, because they're trying to create a connection."

We work with participants on a personal level. "Our coaches are trained to engage them and build trust in relationships and make sure that they're a trusted resource within the system to help them better manage their costs," Neal says. This is high-touch, personal chronic care management, in which we work to treat the whole participant by engaging, supporting, and helping.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Healthcare costs are the second-biggest item on most business's P&Ls, after labor costs. Through extensive, sophisticated data analysis, we can identify where your costs are coming from and what to target.

But with health, just as with business, it comes down to people. While chronic conditions are a large statistical healthcare challenge, each point in that challenge is a person. That's where success will come from, connecting with the people who work for you to help them get better quality, more effective, and more efficient healthcare, to make them happier, healthier, and more productive—all while spurring big savings for your business.



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—John Neal, chief growth officer,
HMC HealthWorks

HMC HealthWorks has been delivering improved health outcomes and ROI you can count on since 1976.



Learn more about HMC HealthWorks and how we can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve the quality of life and well-being of your population.

CONTACT

Janis DiMonaco, Ph.D., LICSW
President and CEO
888-369-5054
jdimonaco@hmcebs.com

