



Leveraging data analytics to help increase employee engagement for better outcomes

Combining data and targeted communications helps employers tailor their benefits strategy to help improve the member experience and lower costs



Employee populations are diverse and complex—geography, demographics, type of work, interests and values all play a role in defining unique individuals. And considering that about 50% of Americans have employer-based health care coverage,¹ there's no shortage of health-related data available for analysis. What employers do with that data, though, can help define their health benefits strategy.

UnitedHealthcare uses advanced analytics to process multiple sources of data—ranging from claims to physical and behavioral health data—to help create a more personalized member experience and drive engagement. By identifying unique populations and sub-populations, employers may provide these employees with more tailored support to navigate the health system.

For instance, about 3%–5% of those with complex care needs reported 5 times the number of claims than those without advanced needs.² And about 1% of those with complex care

needs drove more than 30% of the total cost for care.² This example illustrates why treating a complex care population the same as the general population leaves opportunity on the table for cost efficiency and overall member engagement.

“There's more than enough data in health care. What we do is filter it all down, craft the right message and in order for employers to act upon it—it's part science, part art and one of the key competencies we have in the marketplace,” says Craig Kurtzweil, Vice President, Center for Advanced Analytics with UnitedHealthcare.

The ability to find actionable solutions from data allows employers to:

- Pinpoint precise opportunities to help employees
- Target communications to specific employee groups
- Understand the effect of social determinants of health

“Without the ability to pinpoint precise opportunities, employers may spread their solutions across broad populations, and lose the personalization that shows they care about their employees.”

Craig Kurtzweil

Vice President, Center for Advanced Analytics
with UnitedHealthcare



Pinpointing precise opportunities to help employees who need more care

When analyzing sub-populations, combining UnitedHealthcare’s proprietary analytics capabilities with an employee’s background information provides an opportunity to tailor more relevant communications. This can include an employee’s age, gender or geography, and employment information such as division, job type or salary.

While a large national employer’s population may appear healthy overall when viewing the data in aggregate, Kurtzweil explains that a closer look at one of its locations may reveal a more targeted opportunity for engagement based on condition prevalence in a sub-population, such as a group of employees with type 2 diabetes struggling to effectively manage the condition.

By leveraging the employer’s health care data, UnitedHealthcare discovered that although there were quality, cost-efficient designated UnitedHealth Premium® providers in the area, the employees weren’t utilizing them. The nature of their work made it difficult for the employees to make appointments during regular business hours, Kurtzweil explains.

Through on-site events with providers that engaged both the employees and leadership—a key component to any effective employee engagement effort—employees began complying with measures such as medication adherence to help manage their condition. This resulted in diabetic HBA1C compliance or controlled blood sugar levels increasing 8% year over year.³ This approach helped the employer address an employee pain point and find the right solution for their employees.

“Our sophisticated approach allows us to deliver the right message to the right members at the right time to help produce the desired result. We’re customizing what we do to meet members where they’re at,” Kurtzweil says.

Targeting members with timely messages

Advanced data analytics helps employers understand what drives high utilization, engagement and cost at an individual level within their population and turn those insights into personalized member outreach.

Employers can implement targeted interventions by working with their benefits team and through collaborating with UnitedHealthcare Engagement Solutions, a full-service consulting and creative agency that creates customized multi-channel campaigns and communications for large employers.

“We use the power of our data and the strength of our organization to really understand where our members are in their health care journeys and put that knowledge into action,” says Cheryl Mau, Vice President of Engagement Solutions at UnitedHealthcare.

Engagement Solutions takes a multi-channel approach to create customized, targeted campaigns to help guide members toward optimal health care decisions. These channels may include direct mail, email and text, videos, e-learning courses, incentives and on-site events. Employees and their families may be more likely to access quality and lower-cost care, manage their chronic conditions, and avoid costly services after they’ve received targeted communications.

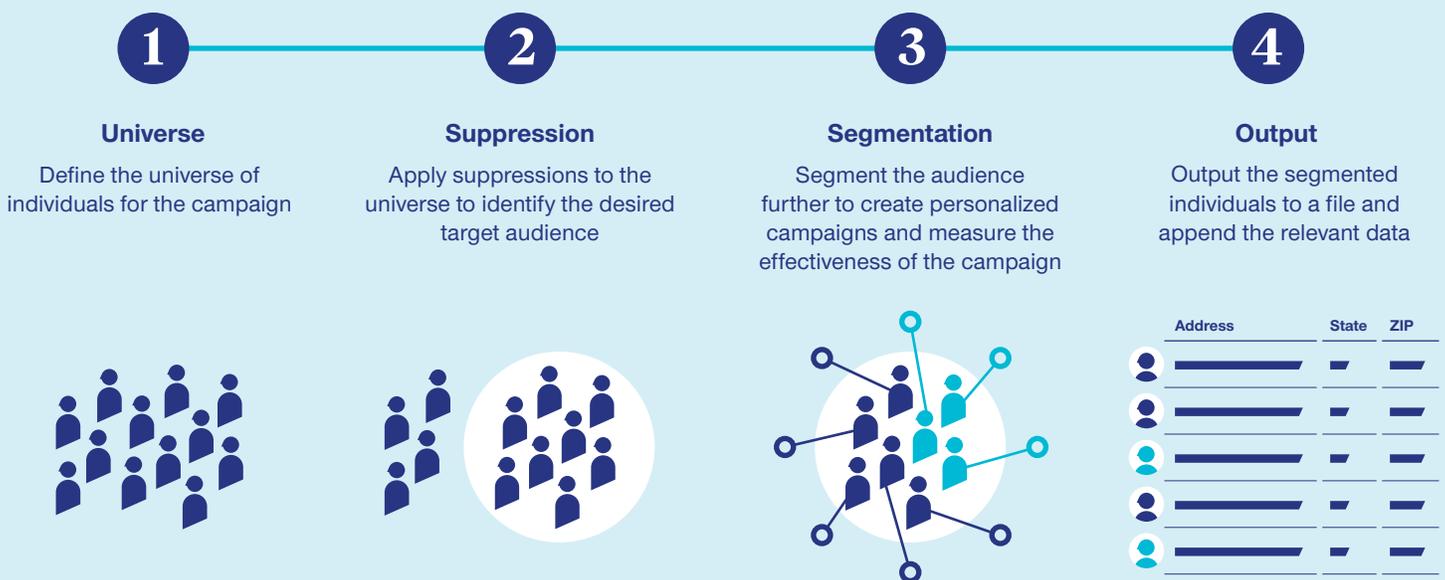
After the campaigns conclude, employers receive performance measurement reports that include the actions their employees took and the impact the campaigns had on cost savings. The performance measurement reports also help to inform future campaigns.

The impact of segmentation targeting was recently brought to life for 10 employers struggling with high-cost musculoskeletal claims. Employees from each employer received education around treatment options and assistance in connecting to care providers who turn to pain management and surgical alternatives before surgery.

Then the analytics team segmented the target audience to members with medical/surgical claims and those with conservative care claims. Next, they developed marketing materials for direct mail and emails to employees that made chronic pain relatable and pointed members to alternative low-cost, effective treatment options. The result was \$3.5 million in cost savings over a 2-year-period.⁴

“Unlike traditional marketing, we can be far more specific about what benefits members have and how to access them,” Mau says. “We’re always looking for creative ways to understand where a member is on their journey and where we can help.”

In order to identify the targeted audience, UnitedHealthcare takes a 4-step approach





**“At the end of the day,
it’s about impacting
the member to improve
their overall health.”**

Craig Kurtzweil

Vice President, Center for Advanced Analytics with UnitedHealthcare

Understanding the effect of social determinants of health on employee wellness

Research shows that medical care accounts for about 20%⁵ of modifiable contributing factors for positive health outcomes and well-being, while social determinants of health such as education and employment have an even greater impact.

While claims data is valuable, it’s important for employers to also consider dynamics such as poverty and health disparities to understand the why behind health care decisions individuals make. It helps to determine if there are any benefit gaps to address.⁶

“There is only so much that can be gleaned from claims data and there are headwinds and tailwinds that make a significant impact in what the claims look like at the end of the day,” Kurtzweil says.

For example, when an employer discovered high, unnecessary utilization of the ER, the UnitedHealthcare data analytics team discovered that the plant location was in a high-crime area.

This caused many employees to not engage with primary care physicians on health conditions that eventually led to the need to use the ER. To address the challenge, the employer added an on-site nurse to tackle less complex health issues and implemented a strategy to promote telehealth and digital capabilities, Kurtzweil says.

UnitedHealthcare works with employers to address how social disparities and racial inequities impact employee health, and referring members into appropriate programs in their communities. When employers address employee needs beyond physical health, they may achieve a more productive workforce and lower health care costs.

“We believe our expertise working with employers, community organizations and other collaborators will help make systemic changes in the health care system,” Kurtzweil says.

Learn more

Contact your broker, consultant
or UnitedHealthcare representative

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¹ Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2018. United States Census Bureau.

² UnitedHealthcare National Accounts 2019 Book of Business.

³ UnitedHealthcare claims data, 2016.

⁴ UnitedHealth Group Center for Advanced Analytics, October 2020.

⁵ Patient health and wellness: What’s a ZIP code got to do with it? Wolters Kluwer, Jan. 13, 2021.

⁶ Consider Social Determinants of Health When Offering Benefits. SHRM. March 2, 2022.

These case studies are true but identifying characteristics have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Savings for enrolled members are case specific. Results will vary based on client specific demographics and plan design.

The UnitedHealth Premium® designation program is a resource for informational purposes only. Designations are displayed in UnitedHealthcare online physician directories at myuhc.com®. You should always visit myuhc.com for the most current information. **Premium designations are a guide to choosing a physician and may be used as one of many factors you consider when choosing a physician. If you already have a physician, you may also wish to confer with him or her for advice on selecting other physicians. You should also discuss designations with a physician before choosing him or her. Physician evaluations have a risk of error and should not be the sole basis for selecting a physician.** Please visit myuhc.com for detailed program information and methodologies.

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