

Case study

A healthier community starts with a healthier workforce



Organization: **Seminole County Sheriff's Office**

Location: **Seminole County, Florida**

Number of employees: **1,400**

Serves: **470,000+ residents and 14,000+ businesses**



Photo courtesy the Seminole County Sheriff's Office

How the Seminole County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) built an innovative member engagement strategy to help address the holistic health and wellness needs of their employees.

Situation

- Because of the high-stress nature of policing, providing benefits that help employees and their families feel secure and cared for is a top priority at SCSO
- The COVID-19 pandemic and increased pressures on policing professionals created additional physical and mental health stressors for employees
- Many employees were disengaged in their health care and their benefits, resulting in higher medical costs and poorer health-related decision-making; industry stigma made some reluctant to seek behavioral health care

Action

- In 2016, SCSO switched from a fully insured plan to a self-funded plan administered by UnitedHealthcare, giving them more flexibility to expand and enhance their benefits, wellness programs and mental health support as well as better manage costs
- SCSO changed their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider to Optum for improved coordination between medical and behavioral health benefits
- To help increase engagement and improve health-related decision-making, SCSO added a UnitedHealthcare Health Engagement Nurse who provides in-person events, newsletters and other benefits-related programming

Results

400+ employee information sessions in 2021 on health resources, wellness, nutrition and more¹

↑ 20% higher decision-making scores related to wellness among employees who engaged with the health engagement nurse, compared to those who didn't²

1,123 total pounds lost among 116 at-risk employee participants in a weight-loss program³



Committed to a community of care

Led by Sheriff Dennis Lemma, the 1,400+ employees at the Seminole County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) are committed to their mission to enhance the quality of life by reducing crime—and the fear of crime—throughout Seminole County, Florida.

“From patrolling the streets to working in child protective services, our employees are dealing with a lot of stressful situations,” says Chief of Administrative Services, Lisa Spriggs, whose team manages employee benefits. “It’s important that they feel secure—that they and their families are taken care of with high-quality benefits at a reasonable cost.”

Taking care of employees goes beyond physical health. With the majority of SCSO survey respondents saying they felt overwhelmed with stress sometimes or often,⁴ employee emotional well-being is also a priority.

Engaging employees in health and well-being

To help educate employees about expanded wellness offerings and get them involved in wellness coaching, weight loss, activity tracking and more, SCSO brought on an on-site UnitedHealthcare Health Engagement Nurse, Lisa Guiley, in 2020.

To reach as many employees as possible, Nurse Lisa uses a variety of channels and programming: newsletters, YouTube® videos, on-site presentations and blood pressure checks, step and fitness challenges,

1-on-1 consultations and even a bingo game.

Through enhanced communication of all employee benefits, more employees are now making informed choices to get healthier, such as getting preventive care and participating in clinical programs.

“You have to take care of your workforce if they’re going to take care of your community.”

Sheriff Lemma, SCSO

Prioritizing mental health support

One of Sheriff Lemma’s priorities is mitigating local substance use disorders and mental health issues. “The need for appropriate mental health services in our community has never been greater than it is today,” says Sheriff Lemma. “Both our workforce and community deserve high-quality resources to ensure they are always in the best state of mind.” As part of that initiative, he created the Seminole Collaborative Opioid Response Effort (S.C.O.R.E.), a holistic strategy that includes recovery support for users and enhanced prosecution for drug dealers.

Sheriff Lemma’s commitment to mental health clearly extends to his team, too. “First and foremost is just educating our employees that their benefits include behavioral health,” says Chief Spriggs. Nurse Lisa helps employees understand how to access a continuum of behavioral health benefits—from in-person and virtual therapy to innovative tools like the Sanvello® app, which employees can download for free to help manage stress, anxiety and depression.

With UnitedHealthcare fellow company Optum administering their Employee Assistance Program (EAP), mental health support is more easily coordinated with the medical plan. SCSO also works with Optum to connect employees through EAP with providers experienced in working with first responders.

Today, “Employees are more willing to discuss mental health and what they’re going through than in the past,” says Chief Spriggs.



Photo courtesy the Seminole County Sheriff's Office

Learn more about the Seminole County Sheriff's Office at seminolesheriff.org



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.

¹ Onsite team member activity from Jan. 1, 2021 – Dec. 31, 2021.

² Population is limited to continuously enrolled members and excludes catastrophic cases. “Engaged” is defined as those who attended an individual session/educational series with nurse liaison between Jan. 1, 2021 – Dec. 31, 2021. Total decisions measured = 11,710.

³ Data through Jan. 31, 2022.

⁴ Rally Health Survey: Emotional Well-Being Summary. Data depicts active SCSO employees and spouse/domestic partners completing the Rally Survey between Jan. 1, 2021 and Dec. 31, 2021; excludes catastrophic cases.

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