



Industry Snapshot

Industrial and Manufacturing

Despite having access to richer health benefits due to a strong union influence, employees working in the industrial and manufacturing sector tend to avoid using the health system until they really need it, which may result in suboptimal care decisions and higher costs.

With experience serving industrial and manufacturing clients, including 1.45M health plan members representing nearly 18% of its self-insured business,¹ UnitedHealthcare has the insights, expertise and benefits strategies built to help improve workforce health and productivity, and lower costs for employers and employees alike.



Demographics

+70% male
with an average age of 44²

57% of surveyed manufacturers
have operations in rural locations³

\$102,629 average salary
including pay and benefits, as of 2023⁴

~13M employees
industry-wide⁴



Key health insights

Compared to the entire UnitedHealthcare ASO book of business,¹ employees in this sector had:

- ▼ Less preventive care
- ▼ The lowest prevalence of cholesterol and wellness screenings
- ▲ More ER visits
- ▲ A higher tendency to not seek care at all; 7% have had no claims in the past 2 years



Top health challenges¹



Musculoskeletal (MSK)
Due to repetitive tasks and heavy lifting



Obesity and chronic conditions
Due to lack of engagement with preventive care, wellness, health care in general



Mental health (stress, anxiety, burnout) and access issues
Due to prevalence of shift work (i.e., 12-hour shifts, rotating shifts, unpredictable work schedules)⁵

Strategies for industrial and manufacturing employers

Benefits strategies that help make it easier for industrial and manufacturing workers to prioritize their health and well-being and make better care choices are key to sustaining operational excellence and remaining competitive in this sector.



Drive engagement in preventive care – Employers can strengthen engagement by deploying targeted **employee education campaigns** based on population health insights and incentivizing employees to take part in preventive care activities. Encouraging cholesterol and wellness screenings are smart strategies to consider, especially since this industry has the lowest completion rates of these recommended screenings.



Encourage use of appropriate sites of care – To support more informed and cost-effective health care decisions, employers should help educate employees about **different sites of care** and consider how care navigation strategies can help prevent **unnecessary ER visits**. In fact, many manufacturing clients are adopting network strategies that encourage or require the use of primary care providers (PCPs) and plans that offer greater transparency around care options. Virtual care and on- or near-site clinics are also strategies these clients are adopting more frequently given employees' largely rural demographic and shift work constraints.



Offer access to condition-specific support – To help address top cost drivers for this industry, including **MSK, obesity, cardiovascular disease** and gastrointestinal issues,¹ employers should include programs that are designed to provide tailored support for those conditions. In some cases, offerings may come from outside vendors – like those available via UHC Hub® – and it's important for employers to consider how those offerings may integrate with their other benefits for more streamlined benefits administration and coordination of care.



Focus on sustainable weight management strategies – Although few employers in this industry currently cover **GLP-1 medications** for weight loss, doing so may enhance an employer's benefits package and address growing employee interest – but it should be paired with wellness programs that encourage healthier lifestyles for more sustainable weight management. On-site fitness centers, gym discounts and access to healthy food delivery services can also help reduce the risk of obesity and other chronic conditions.



Promote behavioral health benefits and resources – Employers can help alleviate the work-life balance challenges industrial and manufacturing workers may experience by offering and promoting resources aimed at managing stress, improving sleep, practicing mindfulness and more. For instance, many in this industry are moving toward modernized Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) or Employee Wellbeing Solutions (EWS) that can serve as a front door to behavioral health benefits for employees. Promoting engagement with **self-help tools** and identifying workplace mental health and wellness champions can also help reduce stigma and encourage use of available resources.

Talk to your UnitedHealthcare representative, broker or consultant for more information



¹ UnitedHealthcare ASO book of business, 2025.

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024 data. Available: <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat18.htm>. Accessed: Sept. 16, 2025.

³ The Manufacturing Experience: Attracting and Retaining Manufacturing Talent in a Rural vs. Urban Setting. Center for Manufacturing Research, Aug. 2023. Available: https://www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/MI-FORVIS-Report_Final.pdf. Accessed: Sept. 16, 2025.

⁴ Facts About Manufacturing. National Association of Manufacturers. Available: <https://nam.org/mfgdata/facts-about-manufacturing-expanded/>. Accessed: Sept. 16, 2025.

⁵ McHugh M, Farley D, Rivera AS. A Qualitative Exploration of Shift Work and Employee Well-Being in the US Manufacturing Environment. J Occup Environ Med. 2020 Apr;62(4):303-306. doi: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000001823. PMID: 32032186.

Certain preventive care items and services, including immunizations, are provided as specified by applicable law, including the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), with no cost-sharing to you. These services may be based on your age and other health factors. Other routine services may be covered under your plan, and some plans may require copayments, coinsurance or deductibles for these benefits. Always review your benefit plan documents to determine your specific coverage details.

Disease Management programs and services may vary on a location-by-location basis and are subject to change with written notice. UnitedHealthcare does not guarantee availability of programs in all service areas and provider participation may vary. Certain items may be excluded from coverage and other requirements or restrictions may apply. If you select a new provider or are assigned to a provider who does not participate in the Disease Management program, your participation in the program will be terminated. Self-Funded or Self-Insured Plans (ASO) covered persons may have an additional premium cost. Please check with your employer.

The material provided through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is for informational purposes only. EAP staff cannot diagnose problems or suggest treatment. EAP is not a substitute for your doctor's care. Employees are encouraged to discuss with their doctor how the information provided may be right for them. Your health information is kept confidential in accordance with the law. EAP is not an insurance program and may be discontinued at any time. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against UnitedHealthcare or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and its components may not be available in all states or for all group sizes and is subject to change. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.

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