

Health Starts With Care

Engaging employees when they search for care encourages them to adopt positive long-term health habits



Companies have invested a great deal of time and money to help their employees make healthier lifestyle choices, offering a wide array of health and wellness programs and incentives, such as weight management, smoking cessation, and fitness challenges. They've also partnered with providers to offer employees access to efficient, lower-cost care, such as video visits, in-network doctors, and non-emergency appointments. Certainly, the majority of employees value these programs. So why do so few people take advantage of these benefits?

In this white paper, employers will learn how to increase employee engagement with their health programs, drive higher ROI for these initiatives, and decrease overall benefit costs.

Executive Summary

Based on an analysis of hundreds of millions searches for care from more than 50 million US employees on the Rally platform, we found one key truth: employees are more likely to sign up for wellness programs and make smart care choices when presented with information about them during their search for care. Our data shows people are more motivated to sign up for health and wellness

programs when they're actively thinking about their health and taking action to search for doctors or medical facilities.

Engagement With Health Programs Reduces the Cost of Care

Both employers and employees agree that the rising cost of health care is a critical concern. When employees use preventive care, enroll in health programs, and make smart care choices, they use fewer higher-priced services like emergency care and specialists. This behavior reduces their own out-of-pocket expenses and helps keep employer benefit costs down as well. Yet many employees don't enroll in health programs or opt for lower-cost care because they simply don't know these services are available to them. For employers, this is a huge missed opportunity to reduce health care costs, which has become an imperative.

Research from the Kaiser Family Foundation found that consumers' total out-of-pocket spending for health care rose by 54 percent between 2006 and 2016, while wages increased just 29 percent during the same period. No wonder 82 percent of employees are dissatisfied with the cost of their health care plans, and 61 percent of Americans

KEY TAKEAWAY:

When employees are actively searching for care, they're receptive to joining relevant health-and-wellness programs and choosing lower-cost services such as virtual visits. Thus, it's important for employers to present information on these programs during the search for care, in addition to using other digital marketing tactics such as email campaigns or rewards programs.

overall are worried about rising health care costs.

Employers are also feeling the pinch. **For large employers in 2019, the average cost to insure one employee will reach \$15,000 this year**, according to the National Business Group on Health. Health benefit costs have risen at about 5 percent a year for the last six years, over three times the rate of inflation. Such an increase is clearly unaffordable and unsustainable over the long term.

Clearly, the best way to keep benefit costs down is to encourage employees to make healthy lifestyle choices and smart care decisions. That's why 87 percent of US employers say increasing employee engagement in health and well-being is a key priority over the next three years, according to Willis Towers Watson. As we've established, the vast majority of large employers offer health and wellness programs and lower-cost care options, yet few employees use them. How can employers get more of their workers to engage in healthy behaviors?

First and foremost, employers must make sure their employees know they're eligible for such benefits. According to Willis Towers Watson, when asked if "my employer provides good tools and resources to help me manage my health, 55 percent of employees said yes in 2011, while just 39 percent said so in 2018 — despite a significant increase in

employers' offering wellness programs during those years. Many employees simply don't know what's offered.

Engage Employees When They're Thinking About Care

The majority of Americans increasingly want to use digital platforms to manage almost every aspect of their lives — and health care is no exception. According to McKinsey, about 70 percent of Americans would prefer to engage with the health care system digitally, using the web and mobile devices to find, price, book, and pay for care.

Consumers most often engage with the health care system when they have a pressing medical issue and need to find a doctor, hospital, or clinic. Whether that's because they're part of the 64 percent of Americans who regularly avoid or delay care because they cannot afford it, or simply because they procrastinate like most human beings, the fact is most people connect with the health system when they're actively looking for care.

A recent analysis of six months of searches on the Rally platform shows that when people are shopping for care, they're receptive to signing up for health programs. Our research also shows they're also more likely to opt for lower-cost services such as in-network physicians and

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virtual visits when presented with the option. For employers, this “searching for care” moment is the best time to engage employees in making healthy choices.

Case Studies in Employee Health Engagement

Rally data shows that employees searching for care are more likely to enroll in health programs and make smart care decisions.

For example, when a user searches for terms like “weight loss” or “nutritionist” on Rally’s tool to find and price care, they’re presented not just with in-network nutritionists and general practitioners in their area, but also with information about the Real Appeal weight loss coaching and support program.

- Recently, 6,732 people searching for weight-related care on Rally were presented with a prominently placed search link about Real Appeal. Of these people, 672 visited the Real Appeal website, where **46 percent** then enrolled in the program.
- By comparison, an email campaign aimed at people who expressed interest in a weight loss program during open enrollment showed a **37 percent** conversion rate from the landing page.

Clearly, presenting people with relevant health and wellness programs when they are searching for care is a good way to encourage them to use their benefits.

Fifty million people use the Rally Care tool, doing hundreds of millions of searches, so placing these targeted messages within the search experience also generates more impressions.

Similarly, when employees are looking for care, Rally promotes virtual visits, if that care can be delivered by a virtual provider. It’s showcased within search results, via banners, or by links, depending on where the user is.

By serving up this low-cost and immediate option to address an employee’s care needs, Rally helps people find appropriate care faster and avoid unnecessary visits to costly emergency rooms or urgent care clinics. One Rally study of medical claims saw the following changes:

- When presented with the option for virtual visits when searching for care, **45 percent** of users chose this option.
- By promoting virtual visits during employees’ searches for care, employers saw an average **4 percent decrease** in emergency room visits.

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It's critical to deploy a unified health management platform to help employees find the care they need, learn about health and wellness options, and easily enroll in these programs.

Clearly, giving employees the option of virtual visits while they're actively searching for care is a highly effective way to steer people to this choice. And this propensity for employees to choose lower-cost services when presented with them during a search also occurs with doctor selection. One Rally study showed that more people chose in-network providers and premium doctors when presented with those options during a search for care.

- 41 percent of people searching for out-of-network providers were guided to lower-cost in-network providers.
- 48 percent of people searching for specialists were guided to premium doctors, which saves an average of \$300 per episode of care.

Conclusion

Presenting employees with information about relevant health and wellness programs and lower-cost care options when they're searching for care is a great opportunity to capture their attention. Used in conjunction with other touch points such as benefits enrollment or email campaigns, this

expands the top of the funnel to include people searching for care, which allows employers to present the offer to more people, more frequently, and in an integrated way.

For employers, this means it's critical to deploy a unified health management platform to help employees find the care they need, learn about health and wellness options, and easily enroll in these programs.

At Rally, we've built the industry's most comprehensive health care management platform, which allows employees to find, price, and schedule individualized care, as well as deeply engage with personalized health and wellness programs. Employers can use Rally to provide information about all the benefits they offer, engaging employees with these services when they're most likely to sign up. What's more, with Rally's data-driven platform, each employee is presented with personalized health programs that serve their specific needs.

For more information on how Rally can decrease employer health care costs by helping employees thrive, please contact us today.

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