



Breaking barriers: How convenience is transforming the way people access care



The demand for greater convenience calls for continued innovation in how employees access health care.

The ways people engage the health care system have rapidly changed over the last decade. In the past, patients were limited to receiving medical treatment at a provider's brick-and-mortar office or a medical facility. But patient expectations and advancements in technology are driving innovations that make it easier for members to access the care they need, when they need it.

Gone are the days when patients had to wait for business hours to access health care. Innovations in the digital and virtual health space are breaking down the barriers of the traditional brick-and-mortar model and offering more convenient care alternatives. This is evident in the investments providers and carriers have made over recent years, and many employers are working to ensure their employees have access to these care options.

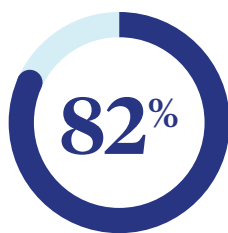
In fact, a report found that 66% of employers expect virtual health to have a significant impact on how care is delivered in the future.¹ And a separate survey of large employers broke this down further:²

66%

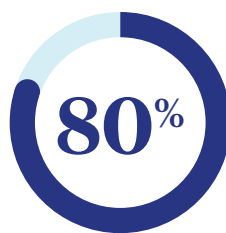
of employers expect virtual health to have a significant impact on how care is delivered in the future¹



indicated plans to expand their virtual health offerings for minor, acute care and mental health services in 2025 or 2026



indicated plans to expand their virtual care management solutions for diabetes and musculoskeletal conditions in 2025 or 2026



indicated plans to expand their virtual health and lifestyle coaching programs in 2025 or 2026



As employers look to incorporate more digital and virtual health offerings into their employee benefits, it may not be surprising to learn that more than 50% of employers typically work with 4–9 different digital health solutions.³ Recognizing the need to simplify this process, UnitedHealthcare developed the **UHC Hub™**, which allows employers to select and purchase digital and virtual health solutions to complement their UnitedHealthcare offerings.

On the member side, UnitedHealthcare is also launching UHC Store – a consumer-centric shopping experience that allows members the freedom to choose from a variety of discounted health and wellness solutions to help support their personal health journey, all within the UnitedHealthcare digital experience.

And while many of these vendors offer on-demand, self-service support, there are times in which talking to a provider is preferred or even necessary. Virtual visits offer a happy medium, as they are still a convenient alternative to the brick-and-mortar model. Plus, virtual visits can often determine whether further in-person care is needed, helping ensure employees are getting the most appropriate and cost-effective care. With a 4.9 out of 5 satisfaction ranking among UnitedHealthcare members⁴ and an average wait time of 15 minutes or less,⁵ it's no surprise virtual care is becoming a standard offering and, frankly, an expectation among employees.

Additional ways the health care industry is working to make health care more convenient and accessible include creating connected experiences and reducing the number of steps it takes for members to get the care they need, such as:

- Offering the ability to schedule appointments with providers online
- Streamlining the pre-appointment check-in process
- Eliminating prior authorizations for common services or procedures.

Despite not requiring prior authorization over 98% of the time when members seek care, UnitedHealthcare also plans to reduce prior authorization requirements by about 10% in 2025.⁶ And that's after already reducing the total volume of prior authorizations by nearly 20% in 2023.⁶

“We’ve made significant advancements in our digital tools and services to deliver more choice and convenience, making it easier for members to navigate the health care system and get care when and where they need it.”

Samantha Baker

Chief Consumer Officer
UnitedHealthcare Employer & Individual

Additional steps employers can take to make care more accessible for their employees

Understanding the potential impact that can result from employees not getting the care they need, many employers are taking additional steps to help make care more accessible and convenient for their employees. For 29% of large UnitedHealthcare clients, this includes establishing on-site clinics, with an additional 27% planning to offer access to on-site health specialists in 2025.⁷ Plus, 19% indicated they were considering doing the same in future years.⁷



On-site health centers — some of which include clinics, pharmacies, on-site nurses and workout facilities — can be an important part of an employer's overall health plan strategy. They can contribute to improved employee health, higher employee satisfaction, decreased absenteeism and lower costs for both employers and employees.⁸

For the **Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas**, the decision to establish an on-site health center was driven by the desire to make it easier and more convenient for employees to take care of their health and well-being. Additionally, there was a need to drive more effective utilization of the health system within their member population for better health outcomes and lower costs.

Renee Ramirez, human resources director for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, explained: "The claims we paid were oftentimes driven by how our employees were using the health system — or by employees not taking full advantage of the benefits we offered them. So we wanted to make sure our employees took ownership of their health by offering them convenience and low out-of-pocket costs."

The result of offering an on-site health center was that those who used the health center were 6.4% more actively engaged and used the emergency room 5.5% less than those who didn't use the health center.⁹



"We wanted to make sure our employees took ownership of their health by offering them convenience and low out-of-pocket costs."

Renee Ramirez

Human Resources Director
Unified Government of Wyandotte
County/Kansas City, Kansas

Learn how UnitedHealthcare is working to transform the future of health care >

**United
Healthcare®**

¹ 2025 Employer Health Care Strategy Survey, Business Group on Health, August 2024.

² 2024 Large Employers' Health Care Strategy and Plan Design Survey, Business Group on Health, August 2023.

³ MedCity News. "Employer point solution fatigue: How can health startups rise above?" <https://medcitynews.com/2022/09/employer-point-solution-fatigue-how-can-health-startups-rise-above/>. Accessed: March 10, 2025.

⁴ Ratings based on all three UnitedHealthcare virtual care offerings: virtual primary care, virtual specialist care and 24/7 Virtual Visits for calendar-year 2022 with 500K+ members surveyed.

⁵ UnitedHealthcare commercial book of business from 2019-2022.

⁶ UnitedHealthcare internal data, 2024.

⁷ UnitedHealthcare National Account Client Strategy Documentation Project, Preliminary Data.

⁸ The Benefits of Onsite Health Clinics for Employee Wellbeing. Corporate Wellness. Available: <https://www.corporatewellnessmagazine.com/article/the-benefits-of-onsite-health-clinics-for-employee-wellbeing>. Accessed: Feb. 28, 2025.

⁹ UnitedHealthcare case study: Taking an innovative approach to meeting employees where they are with an on-site health center. Oct. 2023. Available: <https://www.uhc.com/employer/news-strategies/case-study-unified-government-of-wyandotte-county-kansas-city>.

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.

Employee benefits including group health plan benefits may be taxable benefits unless they fit into specific exception categories. Please consult with your tax specialist to determine taxability of these offerings.

Insurance coverage provided by or through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or its affiliates. Administrative services provided by United HealthCare Services, Inc. or their affiliates.