

School district works to give employees a supportive health care experience

Organization: **Minneapolis Public Schools**

Industry: **Education**

Location: **Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Number of employees: **≈6,300 benefits-eligible employees**



Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) is committed to providing benefits that support its teachers, administrators and other staff members. UnitedHealthcare has aided MPS in offering its employees access to various resources and support, resulting in a higher utilization of benefits, quicker resolution of issues and an improved health care experience for employees and their families.

Situation

- Operating within a highly regulated and tightly budgeted industry that is funded by taxpayer dollars
- Sought to offer their employees access to a robust national provider network and quality benefits
- Wanted to help ensure employees and their families were engaged in their benefits and felt supported throughout their health care journey

Action

- Switched to UnitedHealthcare in 2021 and quickly established a trusted relationship with their account team
- Developed and deployed targeted employee communications to drive engagement and utilization of benefits
- Brought on a dedicated, on-site UnitedHealthcare service account manager

Results

\$33.7M

in total savings generated from UnitedHealthcare programs beyond contracted discounts¹

40%

of members engaged in clinical programs—
17% higher than UnitedHealthcare benchmark²

473 members

assisted by UnitedHealthcare on-site service
account manager³

Supporting employees, so they can focus on serving students

Around 6,300 benefits-eligible teachers, administrators and other staff members fill the 87 MPS buildings throughout the metro area – which has a rich history dating back to 1834 when the first school was founded.

Funded by taxpayer dollars, MPS recognized that working with a carrier capable of providing quality benefits and offering hands-on support was vital to offering a more competitive and enticing compensation package.

That's what led MPS to switch to UnitedHealthcare, with Peter Ronza, former director of total compensation for MPS, indicating that the relationship and level of service provided by UnitedHealthcare had been "flawless and unmatched" compared to other vendors he'd worked with.

Offering employees a competitive benefits package

Designing benefits that support all MPS employees – from teachers and custodians to administrators and food service personnel – is where the strategic guidance of UnitedHealthcare has made a difference.

"The collaboration with UnitedHealthcare has enabled us to do even more than we were doing before," Ronza said. "We've come a very long way, not only bringing our benefits to where they should be but doing so in a fiscally responsible way."

\$33.7M

in total savings generated from
UnitedHealthcare programs beyond
contracted discounts¹

"You have to go through a prioritization phase by making sure that the student is at the center of the decisions that we make," said Ibrahima Diop, chief of finance and operations for MPS.

For MPS, that meant offering employees an expansive provider network and a generous suite of benefits and programs through UnitedHealthcare, along with an on-site clinic to help make health care more accessible and affordable, especially for its lower-paid employees.

Through this clinic, employees and their covered dependents can receive primary care services, labs and medications for common conditions, while also receiving referrals to UnitedHealthcare network providers or clinical programs as needed.

"The more employees don't have to worry about their health, the more they can concentrate at work," Ronza said.

Engaging employees for better health plan utilization

Offering benefits is one thing, but getting employees to understand how to use them is another. "Health care is really useless unless employees know how to use it," Ronza said.

With guidance from UnitedHealthcare, MPS has been – and continues to be – able to identify opportunities to better engage and educate its employees about the health benefits available to them.

This includes looking at claims data and utilization patterns to help inform wellness initiatives and targeted employee communications. For instance, a multi-touch email and direct mail campaign promoting preventive care led by UnitedHealthcare, in addition to the wellness activities led by MPS, likely contributed to the nearly 3-point increase in the percentage of adults who received a wellness visit in 2023.²

Delivering a more supportive health care experience

Understanding how much the employee experience matters to MPS, UnitedHealthcare assigned a dedicated on-site service account manager, James Bennett, to help employees and their families understand their coverage and benefits information and resolve billing or claims issues.

"James has been a huge benefit," Ronza said. "UnitedHealthcare has allowed our employees to have somebody they can talk to, who can look at things we can't look at and offer support."

In one situation, an MPS employee was undergoing a transplant and received numerous bills for various appointments, tests and more. James brought clarity, helping the employee more effectively navigate their health care journey.

This level of service also made Ronza's job easier and strengthened the relationship between MPS and UnitedHealthcare.

"I've worked with a variety of health benefit vendors throughout the course of my career, but the experience with UnitedHealthcare and their service has been flawless and unmatched."



¹ UnitedHealthcare Annual Health Plan Performance Review for Minneapolis Public Schools based on claims incurred between Jan. 1, 2023, through Dec. 31, 2023, and paid through Feb. 29, 2024, compared to claims incurred between Jan. 1, 2022, through Dec. 31, 2022, and paid through Feb. 28, 2023.

² UnitedHealthcare Executive Performance Report for Minneapolis Public Schools based on claims incurred between Jan. 1, 2023, through Dec. 31, 2023, and paid through Feb. 29, 2024, compared to claims incurred between Jan. 1, 2022, through Dec. 31, 2022, and paid through Feb. 28, 2023.

³ UnitedHealthcare data based on daily issue log for 2023, provided by James Bennett as the on-site service account manager for Minneapolis Public Schools.

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.

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.

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