



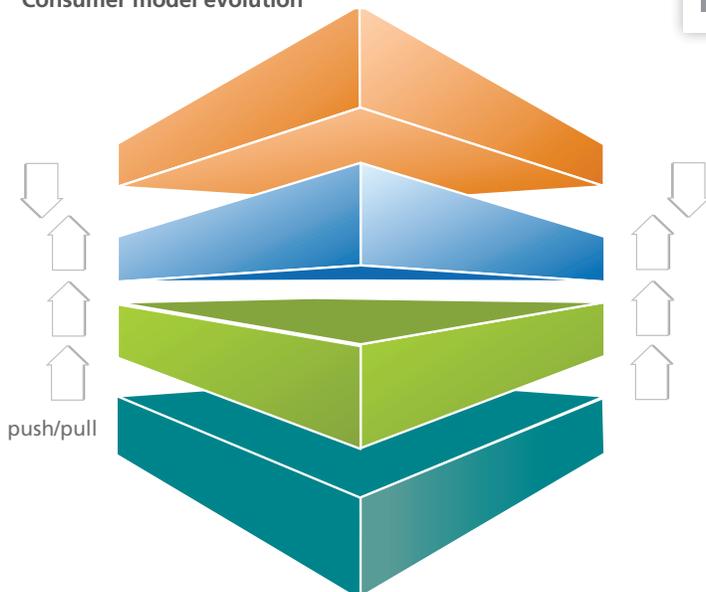
Consumer engagement program paves the way for stronger member satisfaction, lower costs

Recent changes in health care are giving consumers today an increasingly significant role in choosing, utilizing and evaluating their health insurance plans, which means that plans need to move beyond focusing on member acquisition and toward building a seamless, comprehensive and personalized experience that spans the organization and meets the current and evolving needs of their members.

This integrated consumer model is a necessary paradigm shift that (1) reflects the increasing role of consumers as the ultimate purchasers of health care products; and (2) recognizes that in an environment where risk adjustment and chronic disease interventions help manage costs, interacting with the consumer simply makes sense, according to Lori Stevens, senior vice president, Payer Solutions, Optum™.

“The best information about a member resides with the member,” Stevens said at an Optum Perspectives webinar, “The Evolution of the Health Care Consumer: Creating a Comprehensive Experience.” She noted that the earlier the plan’s interaction with the consumer is, the easier it will be “to inform and trigger appropriate responses.” And, because there is a systemic need for consumers to take ultimate ownership of their health and the cost of their care, more than just cost-shifting is required.

Figure 1
Consumer model evolution



Working closely with consumers requires highly personalized education, transparency and access to give them the tools [they need] to manage their health effectively.

— Lori Stevens
Sr. Vice President, Payer Solutions, Optum

Consumer interaction layer

Chat, e-forms, gaming, multi-channel, omni-channel, paper, phone, social media, website

Consumer tools

Claim management and payment, financial account management, plan selection, provider scheduling, premium payment, wellness programs

Business process automation

Broker quoting, consolidated bill, consumer profiling, employer quoting and application, rating and underwriting

Data and analytics

Consumer, products, providers, rates

Expert presenters

Lori Stevens, Senior Vice President, Payer Solutions, Optum

Raj Madhure, Vice President, Payer Consulting, Optum

Jayant Parthasarathy (J.P.), Senior Director, Innovation, Research and Development, Optum

Clay Heinz, Vice President, Business Development, Optum

Working closely with consumers “requires highly personalized education, transparency and access to give them the tools [they need] to manage their health effectively,” Stevens stated. Health plans should be prioritizing their investments in consumer engagement strategies in a number of key areas: consumer interaction, consumer tools, business process automation and data and analytics. “Payers are rethinking these processes” to support the end goal of consumer engagement, she added. (See Figure 1)



Consumer engagement strategy improves member experience

Consumers, providers and plans have faced myriad challenges resulting from a lack of integrated health care solutions in the past, Jayant Parthasarathy, senior director, Innovation, Research and Development, Optum, explained to webinar attendees. “There has been far too much price dispersion and variation in cost, costs that do not typically correlate with quality, increasing deductibles and increasing out-of-pocket spend on the consumer side, Parthasarathy said. “Rising deductibles pose a huge challenge for providers in terms of not getting paid and increasing accounts receivable.”

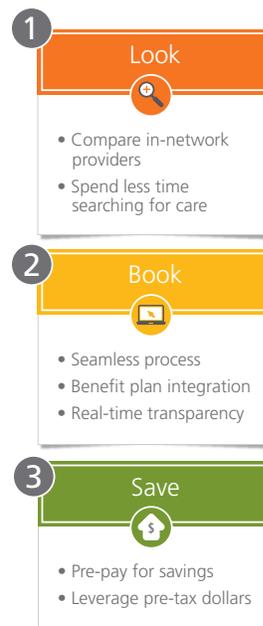
A lack of data transparency also has been problematic, he noted, suggesting that with data transparency, “perhaps the data can help inform the consumer to take action that ultimately benefits the provider” as well.

To demonstrate how this might work, Parthasarathy described an online program Optum developed for a plan where its providers published their services, their available appointments and their prices. Using the website, consumers could choose the provider, select an appointment and know exactly how much they would owe for the

visit based on their deductible, plan configuration and other factors. Further, providers got paid up front. (See Figure 2)

Figure 2

The solution



Providers

- Upfront payment
- Fill appointments/capacity
- Reduced admin and billing
- Practice building

“We surveyed 2,600 people and they were very responsive to the program,” Parthasarathy reported. “Providers are increasingly interested in piloting this program.” He added that this type of program “is a value proposition for consumers. We found that providers were competing and prices were significantly lower than contracted rates, and the level of trust led to repeat bookings in almost 50 percent of cases.”

Open enrollment is a key touch point because it can influence and drive behavior.
 — Raj Madhure
 Senior Vice President, Payer Consulting, Optum

Enrollment is an important first step in the consumer’s journey

Interacting and building trust with consumers not only makes members respond favorably to their health care plan, it also lays a foundation for improving the organization’s reach by lines of business and across lines of business, such as member engagement and wellness and advocacy, Raj Madhure, senior vice president, Payer Consulting, Optum, told webinar attendees.

Plans already may have built lines of communication with consumers in individual commercial business lines and Medicare lines, but there still is work to be done in the group commercial area, where employers are making health care decisions for members and their families, Madhure explained. Open enrollment is a key touch point because it can “influence and drive behavior,” he said. “By helping

consumers pick the right coverage for them and their families, you are able to improve group penetration and the likelihood that they will pick the right products for their needs.”

Further, the information collected during open enrollment discussions — such as contact information and email addresses — can be utilized for enrollment and other purposes, such as establishing long-term engagement, profiles and preferences and communication. Communications capabilities are enabled by the data collected and can be used for ongoing engagement and member outreach. (See Figure 3)

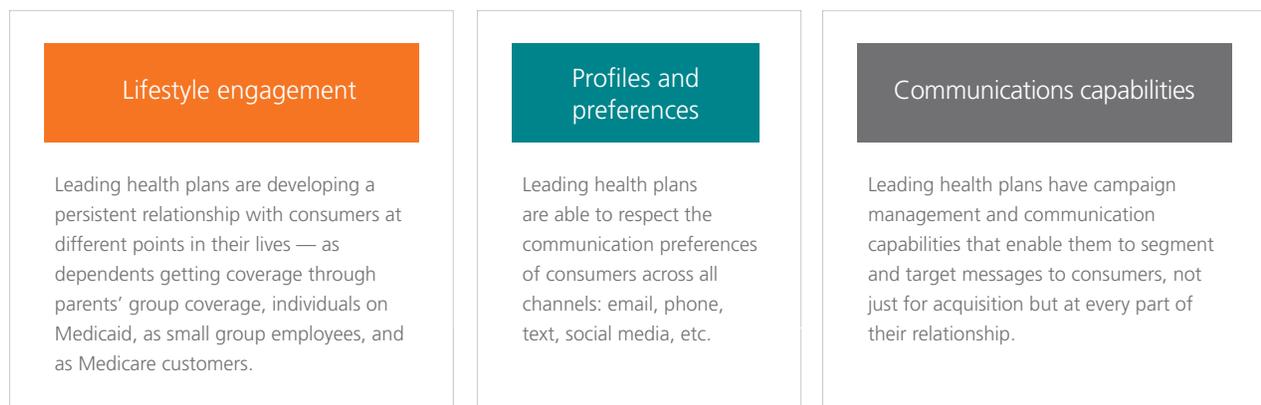
These data also help plans establish a “persistent identifier” for members so their relationship with each member can be maintained over the lifetime of the relationship. “A simple thing like a person’s name can change over time” and result in a loss of contact with the member, according to Madhure, who added that a person could go by “Billy,” “Bill” or “William” at different periods in their life, and that plans’ points of contact — e.g., through enrollment, claims or wellness — do not always assemble data that are organized or provide widespread access so plans can define and maintain a persistent identifier for the life of the member-plan relationship.

To utilize the data to support consumer engagement, plans need an infrastructure that includes the following elements, he stated:

- Consumer data warehouse — A single data repository that consolidates and aggregates data coming from different touch points.
- Sales and service CRM — A way for sales representatives and service associates to engage with consumers, manage opportunities and service incidents.
- Call center capabilities — Identifying where technology can improve processes and foster business opportunities.

Figure 3

Consumer engagement requirements



- Exchange capabilities — Including online enrollment, decision support and billing.
- Broker automation — “Every process has implications for brokers,” Madhure noted, so plans need to consider ways to improve broker automation and ways to get more visibility in brokers’ pipelines, including the use of technology for the purposes of communication and ongoing servicing.

Identifying areas ripe for consumer engagement opportunities

Optum works with plans to assess their current sales automation framework, identify processes and metrics that take costs out of the pipeline and prioritize areas for investment, Madhure said, adding that required investments are unique to each health plan and vary by segment.

Working on individual segments — market engagement, partner engagement, pipeline management, quoting and underwriting, membership engagement and retention — Optum helps plans define “where you think you are from a technology infrastructure and business operations [perspective] and where you think you can go to support your consumer engagement strategy,” Madhure remarked. “Then we turn [those findings] into a roadmap.”

Clay Heinz, vice president, Business Development, Optum, touched upon a basic roadmap for plans’ consumer-focused call center capabilities, saying that what was once a very phone-centric communication channel has become very multi-modal.

“Our capabilities to communicate with consumers in the channel they prefer is really critical in establishing that positive consumer-engagement strategy,” he continued. “And that has paid off with a strong return on investment in the market.”

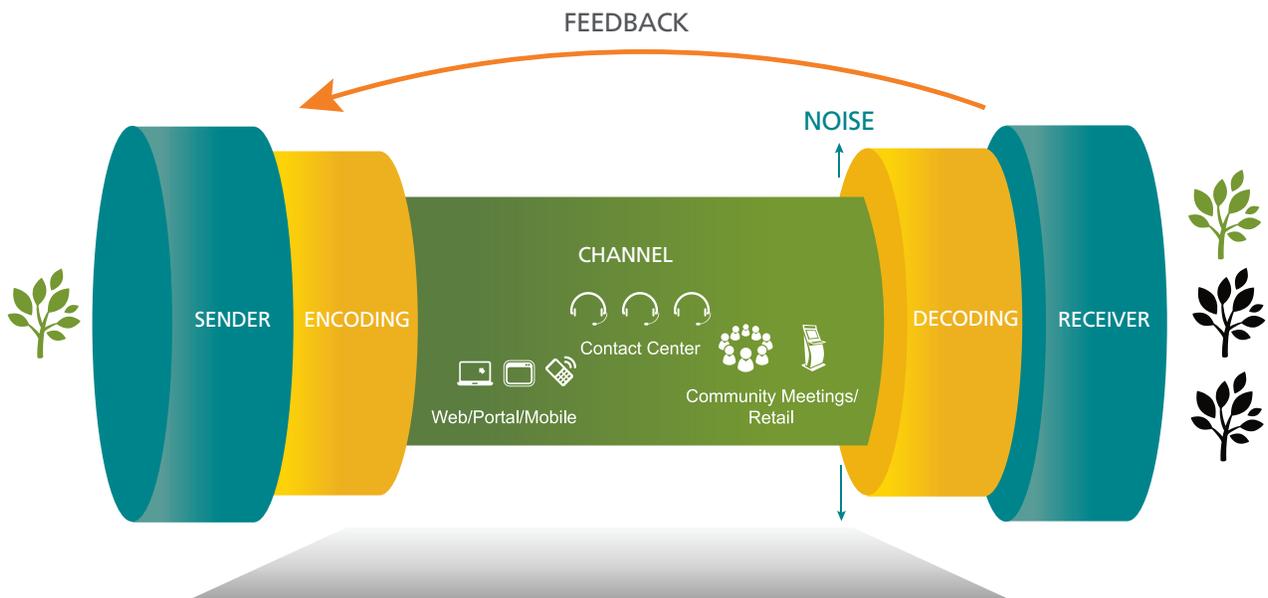
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— Clay Heinz
Vice President, Business Development, Optum

In reviewing some basic communication principles, Heinz mentioned a few ideas to keep in mind, such as “if we are going to be effective with consumer engagement, we have to be effective communicators,” and that plans have to “really test the marketplace to see if what we are communicating is what they are hearing and understanding.” (See Figure 4)

He also said that common expectations and the sharing of personal information equate to satisfaction and strengthened relationships between plans and consumers. For example, “if consumers were sold on a concept that your company cannot deliver on, you’re

Figure 4
Health care communication 101



going to be in trouble down the line with satisfaction,” he said. “You have to think about a member lifetime and how critical it is to communicate effectively. It’s a journey you are on with your consumer.”

To facilitate that journey, plans need to understand that member acquisition is only one piece of the puzzle — plans must consider what risk members represent, and how to engage consumers about their new benefits and a new approach to health care, Heinz said. He asserted that there are three primary questions that members want plans to answer:

- 1) How do I manage my plan?
- 2) How do I manage my health?
- 3) How do I manage my money?

Optum found that “there are three pieces of information that consumers wanted from us, but what did we want from them?” Heinz asked. “We wanted to understand more about the consumers that were coming on board, because ultimately it could drive our risk-adjustment strategy and our referral into health management programs to reduce risks. This was the concept around proactive onboarding.”

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“A proactive member onboarding program delivers improved member retention, lower costs, collection of meaningful data, and concrete risk-adjustment strategies.”

— Clay Heinz
Vice President, Business Development, Optum

concrete risk-adjustment strategies. Optum found that this type of onboarding, in tandem with an overall consumer engagement approach, results in satisfied customers, who are “87 percent more likely to renew their coverage, 83 percent more likely to recommend their coverage and become brand ambassadors, and 43 percent more likely to purchase other products,” Heinz said.

Heinz challenged the audience to examine their approach to consumers, the type of information they already collect, and what can be done with those data to improve the member experience. “Look at your consumers and, by individual segment, understand what their journey is from a communications perspective and how you can coordinate that for more effective communication,” he said.

How Optum can help

Optum assists our clients in effectively targeting, acquiring, retaining and maximizing the right customer relationships through integrated technology platforms, services and consulting solutions. With proven methodologies, customizable tools and experienced professionals, we provide insights in the following areas:

- Analysis and evaluation of new business opportunities
- Modeling and impact of expected population shifts
- Implications of new regulations
- Consumer engagement and retention

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