Evidence-based solutions to fight homelessness can promote individual health and self-sufficiency.

Social determinants of health (including homelessness) have a profound impact on health outcomes, which can result in a number of negative effects for patients, as well as increased costs for patients and the health care system. For example, one study estimates that nearly one-third of all visits to the emergency department were made by those who are chronically homeless. On average, these individuals would visit the emergency room five times in a year, with the highest users visiting every week. At the time of the study, each emergency department visit cost $3,700, which totaled an annual cost on $18,500 per year for the average users, and $44,400 per year for the highest users.

Achieving the best outcomes for individuals with complex needs requires solutions to social challenges that underpin their health. Behavioral and medical complexities require an integrated model of care that combines available community-based supports and services. Homeless Veterans in particular, especially those who have medical and behavioral health complexities, are found struggling with stabilization and ongoing self-sufficiency in high numbers in communities across the country. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to eliminating homelessness among Veterans and has partnered with states, communities and other stakeholders to achieve this goal. However, Veterans with complex social and health care needs face significant challenges that often lead to higher health care utilization and escalating service costs. A comprehensive approach to resolve Veteran homelessness requires multiple partnerships that support the upward and successful trajectory of those who have served.

When you partner with OptumServe™, we can help your organization address homeless Veteran challenges, by applying a successful UnitedHealthcare program called myConnections™. This program supports Medicaid members who struggle with homelessness and other barriers to improve their health and well-being.

Total cost of care declined 52% for 21 individuals who live in myConnections set-aside housing while receiving care and support services.
Evidence-based homeless solutions help promote individual health and self-sufficiency

How UnitedHealthcare transforms the lives of homeless Medicaid recipients

Through UnitedHealthcare and its myConnections program, a specialized complex care team is dedicated to addressing social determinants of health needs that can be an obstacle to success for vulnerable Medicaid recipients. This team excels at creating specialized programs to address the needs of those struggling with homelessness coupled with chronic illness, behavioral health conditions, addiction and other complex care needs. They use evidence-based biopsychosocial solutions that integrate health care and social services into set-aside housing programs to transform lives. Their data-driven approach allows individually tailored clinical care and social work teams to work together to support person-centered solutions and goal planning.

UnitedHealthcare’s philosophy puts their team side by side, every step of the way, with each myConnections program member to address the causes of their instability and to support sustained success that will create the building blocks for a stable lifestyle in the future.

To do this, myConnections first uses local teams, experienced in providing a trauma-informed care model that recognizes and honors the experiences of program members. Next, these teams bring together housing, health care and behavioral health services, and social support programming uniquely developed to identify and address the needs of vulnerable individuals. The program’s care management approach is designed to develop and implement new behaviors and linkages that decrease inefficient health care utilization and improve healthy opportunities for at-risk individuals. Finally, the program builds relationships with community-based organizations to support the ability of program members to meet their basic social needs as they establish their lives anew.

The myConnections program augments an evidence-based, nationally recognized model of care that has demonstrated improved patient outcomes, as well as reduced total cost of care by 50 percent in an evaluation involving 21 participants. Other studies involving housing programs have also shown similar results. UnitedHealthcare’s internal measurements have demonstrated similar results and in some cases have exceeded national benchmarks.
Addressing the challenges faced by homeless Veterans

When you partner with OptumServe, we can leverage UnitedHealthcare’s myConnections capabilities to create an evidence-based solution to help homeless Veterans improve their individual health and self-sufficiency. Veterans already comprise a specialized Medicaid population served by UnitedHealthcare. In fact, an average of 15 percent of Medicaid beneficiaries enrolled in UnitedHealthcare programs identified themselves as Veterans.\(^8\)

We understand that homeless Veterans have an increasing need for flexible solutions that remove barriers unique to their individual experiences and allow each person to carve a path to long-term self-sufficiency.

Both the UnitedHealthcare and OptumServe teams are highly skilled at creating alignment with the right resources, including specialized social supports for Veterans, to bring together the precise housing and social opportunities needed to address homelessness, and other social determinants of health. We also promote engagement with health care services to improve both health outcomes and quality of life.

OptumServe and UnitedHealthcare are dedicated to transforming the lives of Veterans with complex needs everywhere.

Sources:

2. Results from a UnitedHealthcare 2018 analysis of the average total costs for 21 individuals enrolled in the myConnections set-aside housing program in Arizona from December 2015 to August 2018; derived from claims and enrollment data, Sept. 27, 2018.
8. Based on the number of Medicaid beneficiaries served by United Healthcare Community and State Housing+Health program that have self-identified as Veterans in member surveys evaluated on November 2018.
Evidence-based homeless solutions help promote individual health and self-sufficiency

UnitedHealth Group and Optum are honored to support service members, Veterans and their families through partnerships, meaningful volunteer opportunities and community service initiatives across the country.

Learn more about how OptumServe can help your agency better address the needs of homeless Veterans.

Call: 1-800-765-6092
Email: innovate@optum.com
Visit: optum.com/VeteranCare

Boys and Girls Club of America
United Health Foundation’s partnership with this program helps create an interactive online platform and mobile application for military kids, to help them succeed in their new schools and communities as they transition from military to civilian life.

Fisher House Foundation
Through a UnitedHealth Group partnership with the Fisher House Foundation, we provide free, temporary housing and childcare services to families of service members and Veterans needing medical care at Camp Pendleton, Joint Base Lewis McChord and the Naval Medical Center San Diego.

Paralyzed Veterans of America
Paralyzed Veterans of America and UnitedHealth Group® have formed a strategic partnership to help veterans transition to civilian life and navigate the complex landscape of finding jobs.

Blue Star Families Fellowship Program
UnitedHealthcare and Blue Star Families launched this program to support and empower military families. Three military spouses were named ambassadors to serve as a link between military and civilian leadership communities.

Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation
UnitedHealth Group® is a national corporate sponsor of the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, supporting educational opportunities for the children of wounded Veterans.

National Military Family Association
United Health Foundation’s partnership with this program provides scholarships to military spouses working to complete clinical training in mental health and counseling.

We Honor Veterans
Optum® Palliative and Hospice Care participates in We Honor Veterans, a specialized hospice care program for America’s Veterans created by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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