OPTUM®

Health plans subject to performing risk adjustment want to document a more complete picture of member health status for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). To improve accuracy and completeness, they request medical charts from their provider network organizations. For these provider organizations, responding to requests from multiple health plans can be burdensome. A poor response from providers can negatively impact accuracy and completeness of member health status.

Improving efficiency with Optum digital retrieval

There are many ways to retrieve charts, but most are time-consuming for provider staff. The fastest and most efficient method is through digital electronic health record (EHR) connections.

By chart volume, Optum is the leader of Medicare Advantage risk adjustment chart retrieval. Optum uses artificial intelligence (AI) to enable chart retrieval by identifying the modality (analog or direct EHR) deemed most likely to be retrieved successfully from a provider. The chart is routed to the correct entity for collection. This helps eliminate wasting time requesting charts from providers that can be retrieved digitally.

Direct EHR retrieval can entirely remove the need for provider action from the workflow, thus further reducing provider abrasion. In 2020, Optum retrieved >1.7 million charts directly from EHRs and is projected to retrieve over 2 million charts in 2021.

Optum can also simplify the retrieval process by accepting records directly retrieved from EHRs in Continuity of Care Documents (CCDs) or Clinical Document Architecture (CDA) formats. Optum can extract relevant data from those formats to risk-adjustment-acceptable medical records for review by a certified coder.

Digital retrieval is key to retrospective program success

Digital retrieval is an important aspect of the buying decision when considering a retrospective risk adjustment program.

Imagine having one vendor that can:

- Reduce the retrieval and data-sharing burdens for providers

- Flex to accommodate and scale the number of charts being retrieved

- Retrieve all the charts they say they can retrieve quickly and securely

- Reduce need for health plan to monitor provider-level participation, engagement and status tracking

- Offer retrieval options with little or no provider involvement

- Manage the entire retrospective risk adjustment process

This is all possible — and while giving health plans reliable retrieval results and helping providers achieve better program results.

1.7 million

Medical charts retrieved by Optum in 2020 for risk adjustment using digital access

Dispelling common digital connection myths

Retrieval vendors will try to impress you with the myth that digital connections are the principal tool in your chart retrieval arsenal. Here are two common myths you may have heard. Let's establish some facts.

MYTH 01

Digital connections = 100% of charts retrieved

Have you been told by a retrieval vendor you can get a higher retrieval rate because of all the digital connections they have? Then, when that vendor retrieved charts from a particular EHR connection, did you wonder why some charts were not retrieved? Beware of this assumption. A digital connection is not a guarantee for a chart to be retrieved.

FACT

Gaps in digital connectivity can lead to lost retrieval opportunities. Optum has encountered these gaps and created retrieval solutions tailored to address them. We also have local teams to facilitate retrieval in the event a digital connection is not successful.

MYTH 02

Retrieval rate is the only measure of success

This myth is an age-old argument. Have you been told that you should choose charts based on a retrieval vendor's connections to collect those charts? Have you been told that charts retrieved from the digital connections are complete? How should you ensure the content you receive from those digital connections is similar to content received with charts acquired through non-digital methods?

FACT

At Optum, we do not target charts just because we have digital connections. We believe precision targeting comes first. Optum AI precisely predicts and prioritizes charts most likely to support unreported diagnosis codes. If a chart is unlikely to support unreported diagnosis codes, Optum AI does not target it. Optum AI shifts the focus from volume of charts targeted to precision targeting of charts.

In addition, before Optum shifts our retrieval to digital connections, we pilot those connections to be sure the chart is still complete, and the outcomes of a chart review would be consistent with prior program expectations. We recommend the same approach to all our partners.

CASE STUDY

Situation

A large national health plan engaged its existing EHR vendor to retrieve medical charts digitally.

- Due to patient and provider matching issues, fewer than 30% of requested charts were retrieved.

- Retrieved charts were very large, contained extraneous information and caused a lot of scrolling.

Resolution

The same health plan engaged Optum to retrieve previously unobtained charts.

- 50% of previously unmatched charts were retrieved within days.

- Optum chart rendering process formatted charts more concisely, limiting unnecessary scrolling.

Result

The health plan was able to procure more charts and saw an increase in chart review productivity.

Multiple vendor challenges

Health plans typically outsource their retrieval to a mix of vendors. Managing multiple chart retrieval vendors presents its own set of challenges:

- Keeping up with the retrieval vendor landscape that is fragmented and constantly changing

- Administering multiple vendor contracts and service-level agreements (SLAs) while aligning with your forecasts

- Overseeing variation in compliance, delivery and security standards across vendors

- Managing provider engagement not only across your network but also across multiple vendors

- Interpreting reporting across vendors and creating a complete, seamless picture of your inventory

- Integrating technology with fragmented provider systems

Solving provider engagement, adoption and retrieval challenges one connection at a time

In addition to multiple vendor challenges, health plans also face challenges when attempting to engage providers to retrieve charts. A few are:

- Hard to engage the entire provider network, particularly in those areas with low membership density

- Provider administrative resource capacity

- Chart request processing takes time away from patient care

- Data sharing and release-of-information burden

- Lack of provider understanding on the potential practice and patient benefits of participating in a retrospective risk adjustment program

Optum creates tailored retrieval by first exploring individual provider needs by meeting them where they are. We help providers understand the potential efficiencies and growth that can be experienced through direct retrieval.

We create programs to serve the provider's current business needs and flex to accommodate future growth. Through these tailored programs, we can create opportunities with provider organizations that historically have not participated in risk adjustment programs and strengthen relationships with those that have participated.

Connecting providers quickly

We are experienced experts in the industry for integrated digital retrieval. Part of that experience is knowing how to approach providers so getting them connected is seamless.

- The EHR direct setup process facilitates getting a provider connected quickly.

- There is no technology investment for the provider.

- Once we know their EHR vendor, providers need only opt in to the data-sharing permissions within their EHR system and we take care of the rest.

If an EHR vendor is not already an established connection, Optum and its partners can work to establish an agreement with the EHR organization and contact the providers who will be using that connection.

24 hours
Average turnaround time to begin retrieving charts

Direct EHR retrieval can entirely remove the need for provider action from the workflow, thus further reducing provider abrasion.

Retrievals from over
412K sites

representing more than
**717K** providers

Enabling health plans to increase retrieval results

When you engage Optum for your retrieval, you work with one vendor that can solve the challenges described earlier. Leveraging the volume of chart requests across all health plans helps design the best retrieval process so health plans of all sizes can benefit.

Some vendors may be rigid in the data sets they use when retrieving charts. At Optum, we make every effort to retrieve charts successfully by flexing data sets. This flexibility allows us to access more charts as we continue retrieval efforts.

Supporting the retrieval continuum

Whether by digital connection or analog means, Optum retrieval services support the entire retrieval continuum. Multiple retrieval channels assure every effort is made to retrieve a chart.
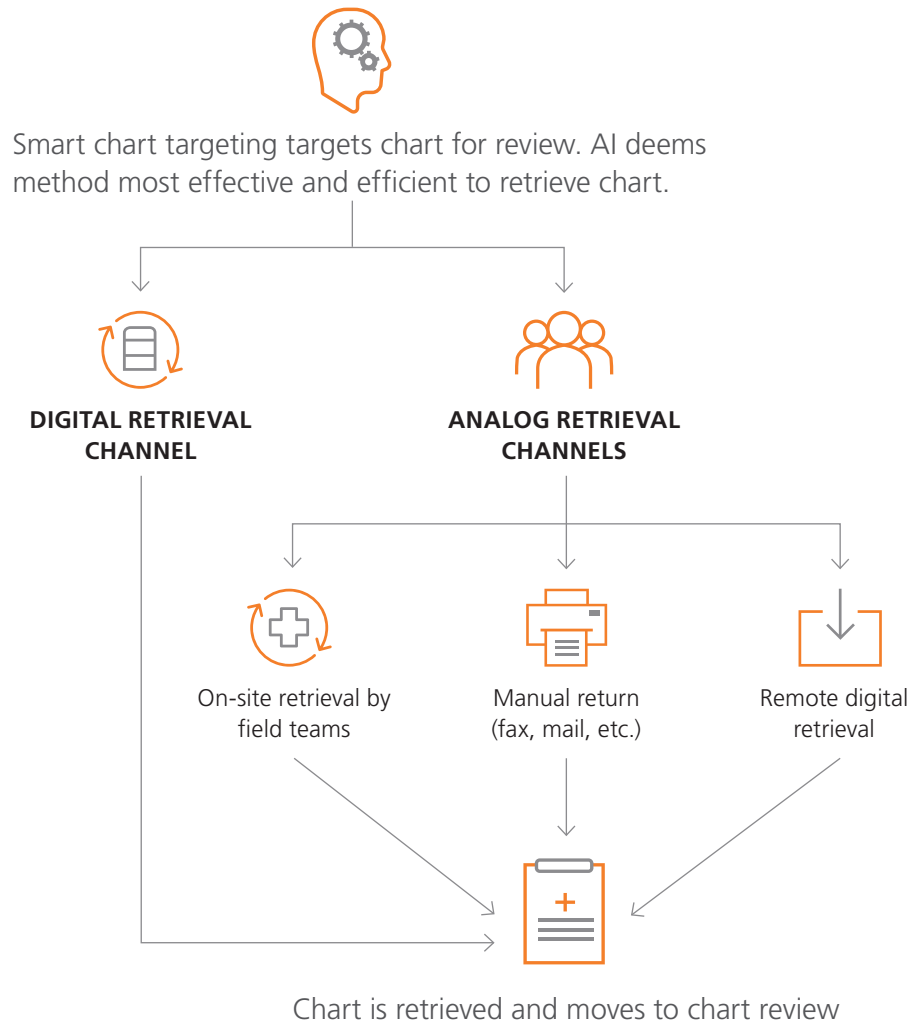
Want to retrieve some or all your medical charts?

Optum offers Direct-to-Optum Chart Retrieval. With this option, health plans can perform their own chart retrieval and submit to Optum. Once we receive those medical charts, we put them into the Optum chart review process to help form a more accurate and complete picture of member health status.

Smart chart targeting targets chart for review. AI deems method most effective and efficient to retrieve chart.

DIGITAL RETRIEVAL CHANNEL

ANALOG RETRIEVAL CHANNELS

On-site retrieval by field teams

Manual return (fax, mail, etc.)

Remote digital retrieval

Chart is retrieved and moves to chart review

Staying nimble, flexible and scalable

To best align with health plan client needs, Optum adapts to geographic markets based on what we have learned from one provider to the next. We continually improve the process, adjusting to how providers operate in various regions of the country. Our scale enables us to be nimbler, and providers are more responsive to granting us access.

Continuing to grow connections

Having a variety of EHR vendor connections makes it easier for providers to participate in chart retrieval. Supported by over 10 years of collaboration with partners in the industry, Optum has established connections with multiple large EHR vendors. And we continue to add new EHR vendors. Our years of experience with large volumes of charts, numerous digital connections and established EHR vendor relationships enable us to continue to scale and grow the number of EHR connections. We also provide reports that offer transparency into accountability of retrieval partners to meet their SLAs.

Lifting the burden

Optum doesn't just stop at digital retrieval. We can round out our retrieval services with a holistic, retrospective risk solution. The AI-enabled components of our comprehensive solution enable a smarter, highly efficient chart review process while helping to maintain coding accuracy and completeness. Optum AI-enabled analytics can transform your chart review operations because of its accuracy when trained with large amounts of data. It modernizes the traditional chart review process by shifting the focus from volume of charts targeted to precision targeting of charts. The result is fewer chart retrieval requests, which lowers provider abrasion and increases the efficiency of each review.

To find out more about digital medical chart retrieval with AI-enabled analytics, please contact:

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