

A hand holding a pen pointing at a document with a network diagram overlay. The diagram consists of white dots connected by thin white lines, forming a complex web. The background is a blurred image of a hand holding a pen, with a warm, orange-toned light effect on the left side.

# **The Role of Data Optimization in Reducing Healthcare Costs and Improving Employee Health and Productivity**

**CONIFER**  
HEALTH SOLUTIONS®

The healthcare industry generates exponential amounts of data; approximately 30% of the entire world's data volume is healthcare data.<sup>1</sup> According to a report by Capital markets, "By 2025, the compound annual growth rate of data for healthcare will reach 36%."



Why should this matter to employers? Because this data could be used to support members—especially those with high-risk conditions. The value to employers comes in the form of reduced healthcare costs and more productive employees. In a time when most industries are facing workforce shortages, having healthier, more productive employees is critical to short and long-term success.

## An Increasingly Unhealthy Workforce

Companies across the country are struggling to keep up with the ever-increasing costs of providing healthcare coverage to an employee population that has grown increasingly unwell. Today, 60% of adults in the U.S. have a chronic disease and 40% have two or more.<sup>2</sup> According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, chronic health conditions cost U.S. employers \$36.4 billion a year in reduced productivity due to absenteeism.<sup>3</sup> In total, employers spend \$575 billion each year due to their employees' poor health.<sup>4</sup>

Employees' pocketbooks are affected as well. Because of the proliferation of high-deductible health plans, they're responsible for an increasingly larger portion of their own healthcare costs. This has led many to make tough choices about their care, like putting off care or not taking their medications as prescribed. For employees living with chronic conditions, this can have disastrous effects. For employers, it further increases costs and reduces productivity.

**In 2021, the average health insurance cost for employers was \$16,253 annually to cover a family and \$6,440 for an individual.<sup>5</sup> This is a 22% increase over the previous five years and a 47% increase over the previous 10 years.**

The pandemic has only made things worse. A survey by The Harris Poll found that more than 60% of adults in the U.S. say they've experienced an undesirable change in their weight since the start of the pandemic, with the average person gaining 29 pounds.<sup>6</sup> Ten percent of those who gained weight gained more than 50 pounds.

In addition to weight gain, more than half of Americans say the pandemic has negatively impacted their mental health.<sup>7</sup> By January of 2021, the number of individuals reporting anxiety and depression had quadrupled when compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Mental health conditions, as well as weight gain, are health issues that take time to address. They require ongoing care and professional guidance. Without the proper care, they can lead to additional health problems and worsening chronic conditions.

Fortunately, there are things employers can do to mitigate the financial impact of chronic disease and help their employees get healthier. It all comes back to data.

## The Power of Data

Healthcare organizations collect multi-terabytes of clinical, claims, environmental and social data on individual consumers each year. These massive, complex, and highly detailed data sets can be used to stratify patient populations and to identify the highest-risk patients and patients who generate the greatest costs. This can be done not just at the national, state, or community level, but also for employee populations. Leveraging this information, employers and their health benefits providers can enroll those employees in special care management programs to help them more effectively manage their conditions and improve their health overall. It's a win-win for the employee and the employer.

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**Offering a customized care management program as part of a comprehensive health benefits package can help employers attract and retain employees—so critical in a time of workforce shortages.**

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## What to Look For in a Data-Driven Care Management Program

The best health management programs are those that leverage actionable data insights to inform a more effective, proactive care plan for the employee. Look for programs that offer the following services and capabilities:

- Include care navigation, case management, disease management and utilization management
- Registered nurses with diverse clinical experience and who receive ongoing education and certification
- Actively facilitate employee-provider engagement to reduce the risk of fragmented care
- Develop employee-centric goals to help improve health-related behaviors and outcomes
- Include assessments of non-medical factors like social determinants like education, economic stability, literacy and housing.

## Success in Action

A multinational manufacturer chose to engage Conifer Health to promote better primary care utilization and to provide enhanced benefits navigation using Conifer's Personal Health Nurses (PHNs). The Conifer PHN program provides an individualized approach to population health management. Going beyond episodic case management or chronic condition management, they help employees navigate the care continuum to find the right care, in the right setting, at the right time.

- Dedicated one-on-one collaboration and care planning with a registered nurse
- Interventions that coordinate care, medications and other benefits and resources
- ConiferCore® technology that prioritizes highest-risk members for outreach and engagement
- Integration with health plans, pharmacy benefit managers, third-party administrators, healthcare provider networks and other benefit solution vendors

Conifer used its vast data insights to identify the employees who could benefit most within the manufacturer's 40,000 regional workforce. Once identified, Conifer created a multipronged outreach plan that included:

- Deploying community based PHNs to facilitate conversations and discover opportunities to coordinate care and eliminate barriers to care access

- Multifaceted campaign to promote program awareness, including print, web and social media
- Virtual health fairs
- Navigating members to the proper level of care, including bidirectional referrals with behavioral health benefits provider

## Results:



**97%**

MEMBER  
SATISFACTION



**86%**

MEMBER  
ENGAGEMENT



**3:1**

RETURN ON  
INVESTMENT

With Conifer, employers can better manage the cost of care for their organization. Employees received education about how to better utilize healthcare and other employee-sponsored benefits, while also engaging them in customized health goal tracking and reporting.

**Conifer's Personal Health Nurse program has achieved a 97% employee satisfaction rate.**

## The Journey Forward

We are living in unprecedented times. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll on employers and workers alike. Now is the perfect time to consider partnering with a data-driven healthcare experience company like Conifer Health to implement a personalized care management program. Not only can you save money and improve productivity, but you can also help your employees live healthier, happier lives.



**Your Partner in Care.** We provide revenue cycle and value-based care solutions that optimize financial performance, improve business outcomes and elevate the healthcare experience

Visit [ConiferHealth.com/LetsTalk](https://ConiferHealth.com/LetsTalk)

## Sources

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