

Health Plan Reduces ER Visits Through Automated Member Outreach

TELEVOX SOLUTIONS



CHALLENGE

With annual emergency room visits in the United States totaling over 120 million and rising, health plans across the nation are placing increased emphasis on reducing unnecessary visits from their members. By proactively steering members toward a different action (visiting a clinic, contacting a help line before visiting, etc.), health plans can prevent the high claims costs associated with these often avoidable trips to the ER.

SOLUTION

Finding effective ways to communicate those alternatives to members is often a difficult task. Large health plans can face thousands of these situations in any given month, so many simply lack the staff and financial resources required to handle every contact. Automated messaging technology provides an ideal solution to reach large groups of members for low cost and with little staff involvement. Since this technology can deliver thousands of messages per hour, the automated process can provide a much more timely contact with members than mailed communication or manual phone campaigns.

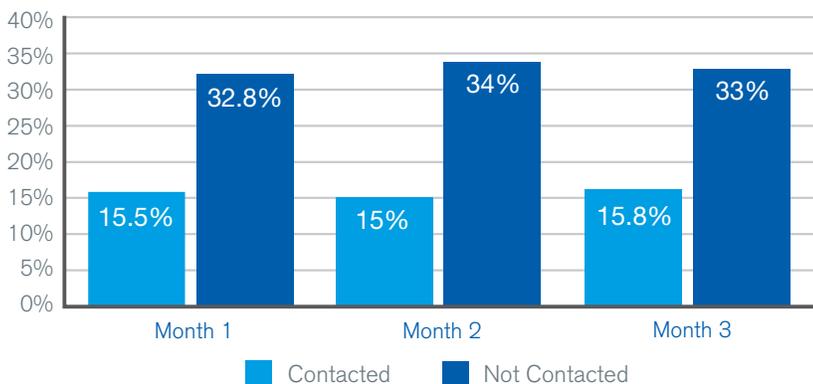
- 53% reduction in ER revisits vs. control group
- Best practice scripting educated members on appropriate routes to care



RESULTS

Over a three-month period, a leading health plan used West notifications to deliver approximately 36,000 automated calls, targeting members who recently made emergency room visits. The message recommended that members contact a plan-hosted help line, call their personal doctor or visit an urgent care center, rather than making the emergency room visit.

Revisits to ER within 30 days



Of the members successfully contacted over the three months, only 15.4% made a repeat ER visit within the next 30 days. This is a sharp decline when compared to members who did not receive the automated call. Over 33% of this group made another ER visit within the month. Automated calls to ER patients were able to cut the chances of a return visit in half.

Below is an example of the member-directed "ER diversion" messages that have become increasingly popular among health plans:

Sample Script

Hello! This is Plan Prevent calling with an important message. We hope you are feeling better after your recent visit to the hospital emergency room. In the future, please know that it is important to call your doctor when you need healthcare for non-life threatening emergencies. They can take care of most of your needs even after normal office hours. If you cannot reach your doctor there are urgent care centers easily available to treat your health needs such as colds, flu, stomachaches, sore throats, bladder infections, simple female problems, earaches, fever, and cough. Many urgent care locations have x-ray and laboratory services. Remember – for non-life threatening emergencies, call your doctor first or visit an urgent care clinic before going to the hospital emergency room! This can save you time and money, as hospital emergency rooms typically have longer wait times and visits are more costly.

You can call a Plan Prevent Care Manager at 1-800-888-8888 to help you with any health issues, get information on your doctor or for a listing of urgent care centers near you.

To repeat this message, please press 1. To speak with us now, please press 2. Thank you.