

Jeff:

Hi, I'm Jeff Bernhard, President of Commercial Markets at Highmark. Welcome back to season two of Hitting a Higher Mark. In this podcast, we explore topics that are transforming how healthcare is delivered, used, and paid for. Today, we'll be discussing how to access information that is empowering members and changing the way we seek care.

Jeff:

We have two special guests with us here today from Highmark to tell us more about this topic. I'd like to welcome Lisa Marsh, Director of Clinical Strategy, and Dr. Philip Majewski, Senior Medical Director of Clinical Sales for Commercial Markets. Thank you for joining me today. Let's dive into today's topic. First off, Lisa, can you explain the benefits of provider quality and cost transparency?

Lisa:

Absolutely, Jeff. We feel that provider quality and cost transparency can enhance the member experience. I think it empowers them to be confident as healthcare consumers. It gives them a peace of mind that they're making the right decisions related to their health care. And this can be really important, because it could be a matter of life and death. We know that unnecessary care and poor quality can lead to increased cost, poor member experience, and poor outcomes.

Lisa:

And, the timing is really important also. We recognize that by identifying members early in their healthcare journey, when they need us most and when we can make the biggest impact, that is essential. We'll be using smart technology to identify them upstream, to support them with quality and cost-efficient data, to get them to the right provider for the right reason at the right time. And this will lead to better health outcomes and to lower healthcare spend.

Jeff:

Yeah, Lisa, I think that's exciting. I think most people, when I think about it, don't realize that, especially provider quality transparency, hasn't been available in the past. And it's exciting that Highmark will actually be the first carrier to provide quality transparency by physician across the United States, of course, with an outside vendor.

Jeff:

So has the market been asking for this? When you talk to consultants and brokers and clients, have they asked us in the past, or is this just something that Highmark is bringing to the market?

Lisa:

They absolutely have. We heard from the customers loud and clear, they want a solution that simplifies the member experience. They want better health outcomes, and they want the ability to cut cost and we know that begins with quality.

Jeff:

I understand Highmark is getting ready to launch a new product, Well360 Clarity, that will help further bring provider transparency. Dr. Majewski, tell me more about this product and why it's good for the market?

Phil:

Yes, I can, Jeff. And thank you for inviting Lisa and me to speak with you today. And thank you for that opportunity to talk about Well360 our portfolio and our most recent addition to that, Well360 Clarity.

Phil:

We started the Well360 portfolio several years ago, and we have about one million members on the platform itself. This newest enhancement, Well360 Clarity by name, it brings member navigation to the right care from a quality and cost perspective. It will accomplish this with a high touch concierge experience, and enhance advocacy and clinical support to address top cost drivers. It does this by using real-time data and artificial intelligence technology, as Lisa mentioned, to identify the earliest moments when a patient may consider or will need a provider for a particular procedure and service.

Phil:

Coupled with that, the quality and cost navigation, Well360 Clarity will indicate where higher value, yet underutilized preventive services and chronic disease gaps exist, so that we can take action with members and their treating providers to close those gaps and achieve better clinical outcomes. So you asked why Well360 Clarity is good for the market, in addition to the reasons that we're being responsive, as we always try to be, but it also drives provider activity to higher value, and that being higher quality at a lower cost.

Jeff:

So let me interpret that a little bit, there's a lot to that. So I think from an AI perspective, that's really important. I think the listeners or people watching this need to know. So what that means is that we're using artificial intelligence upstream. So as an example, we see a patient has an MRI through a claim. Usually following that they're going to visit an orthopedic surgeon.

Jeff:

So I assume you were able to interject early, prior to an authorization for a procedure, and interject with a patient to be able to guide them to a higher quality, ultimately lower cost because of efficiency, doctor. Is that correct?

Phil:

That's correct. You got it.

Jeff:

So Lisa, if provider transparency is our goal, how's Highmark executing on that?

Lisa:

Yeah, Jeff, great question. It really comes down to the people resources. So, we know that the market has tried different tactics. They tried apps, they've tried making things available in press form or on their web, and we know that it's not worked well.

Lisa:

So, we're really creating a journey that focuses on that human element. That of course, there's going to be some support from technology, but we also know that empathy and human compassion has to be part of our solution. So, we're presenting this information timely, what's needed relative to quality and to cost to our members, and we're doing it through human interaction, through our people resources. That's what's going to make us successful.

Jeff:

Yes so I think that's really important because, let's be honest, the system is so complicated so I'm glad that Highmark is creating a product that's backed with empathy, so it's human touch, but I assume we do support that a human touch and empathy with technology. So if I'm talking to you and you're an advocate, and I say, "I'm looking for a great neurosurgeon for my spinal surgery that I have coming up," I can talk to you, you can help guide me to the right doctor. But you can also text me or email me information on the choice of doctors to choose from, right?

Lisa:

Absolutely. We're taking an omni-channel approach. We know that not everyone wants to engage just by phone. So, we're utilizing text messaging, email and digital messaging. It's important to give members that vehicle in which they want to communicate and receive information.

Jeff:

So, what type of clients are a good fit for this type of offering?

Lisa:

So, clients that are looking for a solution that simplifies the member experience, improves health outcomes and reduces their overall healthcare costs, needs to learn about this product.

Jeff:

Which pretty much names every employer in the market. So that leads me to my last question for both of you. There's obviously costs, the price of great service and concierge service isn't free. So, what's the guarantee that Highmark puts behind this product? Phil, let's start with you.

Phil:

Yeah. Thanks, Jeff. Because it's part of our Well360 portfolio, we know that there are components that have been tried and true over the last five plus years. Now currently we have a product, Well360 Connect, that has showed 3-5% savings on an annual basis, depending on the client. And we know that we're adding to Well360 Connect in the new model, Well360 Clarity.

Phil:

So, it takes that savings to the next level, with more clinical outreach to members and providers, but also providing that side of service guidance and guidance to the highest rated quality providers.

Lisa:

In addition to all the things that Phil just mentioned, we also are putting a guarantee in place so that we have committed to the product.

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Jeff:

So to speak, put your money where your mouth is. The problem in our existing system, as you all know, is up to now, the market has never provided that information. So, I think informing people whose providing care, is a responsible thing to do, and they can make the decision from them.

Jeff:

Thank you for joining me to learn more about the power of provider transparency in health care. To listen to an extended video version of this interview, please visit us at our YouTube channel at youtube.com/highmarkinc. Stay tuned for more updates on Well360 Clarity, which will be available to employers starting this July.

Jeff:

I'm Jeff Bernhard, your host. And thanks for listening to Hitting a Higher Mark.