

# Jump-starting employee health amid an unrelenting year

by **Angela Dowling**

President of Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon  
and Chief Revenue Officer

This has been a challenging year on many fronts for the Oregon business community. As we prepare to turn the page on 2020, one of the daunting obstacles facing employers with the approaching winter is the critical need to support and incentivize a healthy and productive workforce.

A recent study revealed that 1 in 4 American adults are grappling with depression, a threefold increase compared with only a few years ago. Pandemic fatigue is real, and reinforcing healthy habits and supporting wellbeing will require extra effort on the part of individuals and employers alike.

## Shifting our approach to accessing care

One way employers have tried to address employee health challenges is by purchasing health apps and one-off benefits programs. Unfortunately, navigating these multiple and disjointed point solutions has had the opposite effect. Employees want an easy to use, all-in-one digital experience. When they are asked to juggle a multitude of apps, passwords and online portals, what results is frustration, low engagement and wasted employer dollars.

Every day I hear from employers asking for more personalized and simpler health care solutions. Facing a serious health event myself this spring, I longed for the same experience.

Thankfully, a new health care solution helped put me back in the driver's seat on my road to improved health. Here's my story.

## Guidance in a time of need

Around the onset of the pandemic, my doctor informed me that I would need surgery. As a parent of three and guiding a health care company through the early days of COVID-19, this was daunting news to say the least. Even though I work in health care, I needed assistance in researching surgeons and finding information to put my mind at ease about the procedure.

I immediately turned to a new health platform, called Journi, offered through my employer-sponsored health plan. Journi combines data, clinical expertise and human support in one easy-to-use, integrated solution for employees. The piece that proved most valuable to me was getting personalized support through the Journi Care Guides.

After contacting a Journi Care Guide and explaining my situation, she came back two days later with all the background on my surgeon's experience, education, and training. Thanks to an initial 20-minute phone call, I was now armed with guidance that would have taken me hours to gather and peace of mind heading into my surgery. And I'm happy to report that the procedure was a success, resulting in a swift, full recovery.

## Investing in the health of your employees

As a parent and caregiver, Journi gave me the support I needed to confidently manage my care path, saving me valuable time so I could focus on my recovery and my family. As a business leader, Journi afforded me the peace of mind to stay focused on managing my team

amidst the pandemic and ensuring that Regence was doing all we could to support our members and communities.

Imagine the value that this solution could provide other employers: a broad and personalized support network for the health care needs of your employees and their families.

Journi empowers people who are looking for a mobile-first, self-service approach to your health care, providing guidance and additional human support for more complex needs. The ability to have a health care specialist help you manage prescriptions, coordinate care, answer health questions, book appointments and more is offered in one easy-to-use platform, with a single sign-in and password. This all-encompassing experience increases utilization and engagement, which ultimately helps ensure that Oregonians can access the care they need and walk the path to better health.

By offering new solutions like Journi that help people more easily engage with their care, employers have the opportunity to positively impact employee wellbeing while reducing health care costs. As we prepare to turn the page on an unrelenting year and brace ourselves for what's to come, this is exactly the kind of simplification and approach we need to reset how we support and improve the health of Oregon's workforce.



Angela Dowling is President of Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon and Chief Revenue Officer. With over 30 years' experience in understanding the many facets of health care, she is passionate about helping employers and consumers find affordable care options and improving the health care experience.

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