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Giving employees new power to access health care – virtually

By Coleen Carey

As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to grip the nation and the world, employers across Utah work to support employees, families and communities and protect their well-being. Seemingly overnight, businesses implemented new policies for workplace safety, expanded health benefits and reinvented their operational models. This heightened focus on health has accelerated the adoption of new technologies like telehealth by years and revealed growing expectations for on-demand digital access to health care.

The current health imperative has also underscored the need for a more sustainable approach to managing personal health. Even as employers invest in much-needed benefits, employees often don't take advantage of them. The Business Group on Health recently reported that a full 43 percent of employer-sponsored benefits go unused.

From the employee's perspective, accessing health care can be overwhelming with obstacles at every turn. Lack of time or demanding work schedules keep them from making – and keeping – appointments. Those who live in rural communities find the distance to doctors prevents them from seeking care. Employees may feel like a number, left to figure out health decisions on their own.

Offering benefits isn't enough

Underutilized benefits can mean employees aren't getting the care they need – and for businesses, that results in increased absenteeism, reduced productivity and lower engagement. What if employees could delegate "the work" of managing health care to a personal assistant? Using a unique digital health platform called Journi, employees can find a simpler path to manage their health. The frustrations of understanding insurance coverage, scheduling appointments, following up on billing issues and other time-consuming tasks could all be assigned to Journi.



With COVID-19 restrictions, in-person care is more challenging than ever. As we head into the winter months, now is the time to harness new solutions to provide convenience and meaningful engagement to ensure a healthier workforce.

Finding a new approach to streamline care

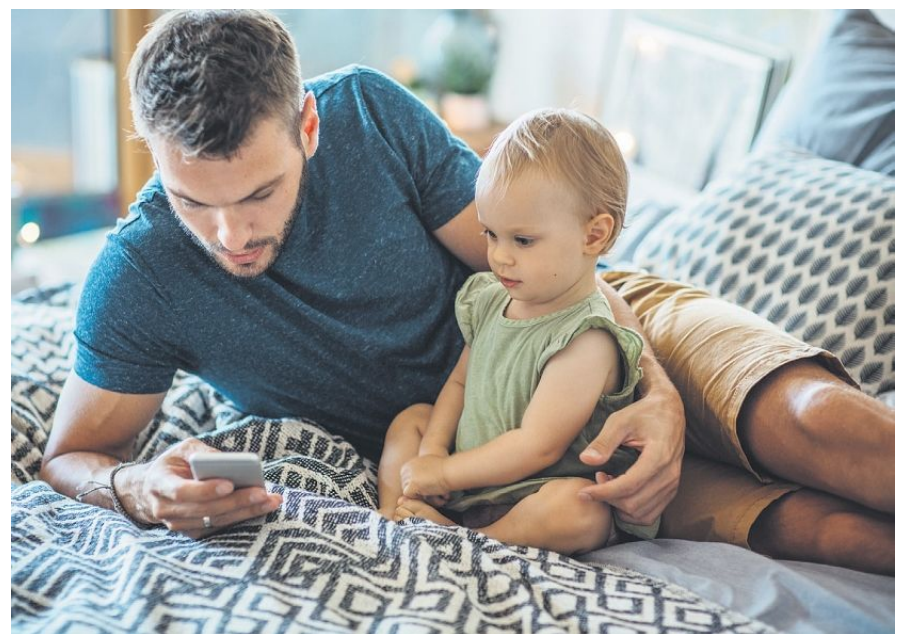
Consumers are already accustomed to using on-demand digital solutions to pay bills, deposit checks, buy groceries and more right from their smartphones. The rapid uptake of telehealth during the pandemic shows that people are willing to use new technologies for health care. While only 11 percent of consumers used virtual care in 2019, a McKinsey survey found in May 2020 that 76 percent say they will likely use the service going forward.

Journi is available as a mobile app that combines data-driven technology with concierge support. The app connects to employer-sponsored health insurance and pulls together health history, claims, deductibles, doctors, prescriptions, and immunizations for employees and their families. It becomes the single resource they can count on to handle every aspect of their health care.

Giving employees a personal health care assistant

Employees need an all-in-one digital experience that includes the support and compassion of real people in addition to self-service features. Journi also provides expert specialists called Care Guides, available 24/7, to help manage prescriptions, coordinate care, answer health questions, book appointments, resolve billing questions and more. They can also connect employees with a nurse or health coach via video, phone or email.

Employees find that this holistic approach makes all the difference in how they think about their health care. Imagine how much easier it would be for someone facing knee surgery: They can ask a Journi Care Guide to gather and compare cost estimates, check for in-network providers, set up physical therapy appointments or explain bills after the procedure. Saving the employee countless hours of research and phone calls, the employee is free to concentrate on family, work and recovery instead of logistics.



Increasing utilization and engagement

While this level of one-on-one service may have once been available only to a few, Journi allows employers to provide critical support to their entire workforce – regardless of education, finances or health needs. This all-encompassing health care experience increases utilization and engagement, which ultimately helps ensure that employees can access the care they need and walk the path to better health.

We are all anxious to turn the page on 2020, but we must be prepared for whatever may come in the new year. By offering comprehensive solutions like Journi that improve access to health care support, employers have the opportunity to positively impact employee well-being while reducing health care costs. It's a forward-thinking approach that can enhance the health of Utah's workforce and help us get back to business.

Employers interested in learning more can visit go.journi.com/UT.



Coleen Carey is vice president of sales and marketing for Journi, an innovative digital health platform that helps employees to take full advantage of their benefits, resulting in healthier people, healthier families and healthier businesses. She is passionate about improving the health care experience for everyone.