

## Sumner County Schools

### Background

Sumner County Schools is a school system located in Sumner County Tennessee, near Nashville, consisting of 52 schools. They have over 3,000 employees (78% female) and over 8,000 total members on their plan. They started providing rather comprehensive onsite services in 2015. Using objective data and a collaborative approach between their onsite clinic provider, benefits advisors and their Benefits team, they have successfully improved cost and the health of members on their plan.

### Challenges

Although Sumner County Schools offered an onsite clinic in 2012, they found themselves challenged with conflicting information. Their onsite clinic provider was reporting significant savings, yet their medical spend continued to climb. The schools decided it was in their best interest to have an independent third party, Vital Incite, complete an objective analysis of their plan to help identify strategies to improve their budget while making sure they were providing appropriate and effective access to care for their plan members.

The analysis revealed many opportunities for the health plan which included poor health of members, with 69% of employees and spouses having at least one chronic condition, low preventative care compliance and poor care coordination. The data also showed their clinic had low engagement and little to no impact on health or even compliance with care. Armed with that information, the schools were able to start to develop objective goals for all of their vendor partners, including their clinic. With objective monitoring, they soon realized the clinic was unsuccessful and unwilling to partner on different strategies. The schools went out to bid for clinic services, and specifically looked for a partner that was willing to evolve with their program needs.

### Strategies

In 2017, Sumner County Schools made 2 significant changes. They changed their plan design and switched onsite clinic providers.

Their benefit advisor, Arista, helped redesign their plans, offering 2 options. The Wellness Plan required the employee to meet Wellness Promise requirements to participate in that plan, which came with lower premiums. The requirements include completing an annual physical and completing health coaching if the employee has high-risk biometrics. The Standard Plan option had no requirements, but members would have higher premiums.



Further, Sumner County Schools selected One to One Health as their new onsite clinic provider. One to One initially began the relationship with the services that were offered at that time but have evolved over the years to add services that were better aligned to the needs of the population. The current services now include:

- 5 clinic locations throughout the Sumner County area
- Preventive and primary care services
- Health coaching
- Lifestyle behavior programs including cooking and fitness classes
- Telehealth
- Behavioral health

As they made these changes, the plan performance was improving significantly, but they still noted, through the data, that their PBM was underperforming. With that knowledge, the benefits advisor assisted in securing a new Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) in 2020, with stronger clinical programs.

## Results

As the programs have evolved, so has the success of the plan. Sumner County Schools has seen improvements in employee health and cost of members on both plans, but with Wellness Plan members outperforming members on the standard plan.

87% of members on the Wellness Plan had engaged in the onsite clinic and annual wellness exam compliance increased from 39% in 2017 to 86% in 2021. Mammogram compliance has increased from 39% in 2017 to 86% in 2021. Overall, Wellness Plan members are almost \$2,000 more cost efficient PMPY than Standard Plan members and their risk has improved so that their future risk, is now lower than their current risk in 2017. That has been accomplished with increased care compliance, but also improvement of lifestyle changes that have reduced their dependency on medications. Clinic participants with hypertension have better BP control and are on less medications than non-participants. And Diabetics are more cost efficient and have better care compliance.

## Takeaways

Sumner County Schools faced a complex problem, which required a complex solution. In the long run, it proved to be effective.

We found that incentivizing members to join the Wellness Plan and meet the requirements, while giving members tools through the clinic partnership, reversed many negative trends and improved the population's overall health. Members who were on the Wellness Plan and





engaged in the clinic have made improvements in multiple areas including polypharmacy, risk improvement, biometric control, condition management, and cost efficiency.

By partnering with a PBM that has stronger clinical programs, as well as focusing on lifestyle management and behavior change through the clinic, Sumner County has been able to reduce polypharmacy concerns but also reduce pharmacy spend by 22% in just 3 years. Further, the increase in primary care and preventative care engagement has positively impacted the population's health over the past 5 years and have influenced all plan members not just those on the Wellness Plan.

Positive change at the population level takes time, dedication, and a multi-faceted, flexible approach to health and well-being. Having the data to identify and direct each step and having partners who are willing to continuously alter strategies is the only path to long term success.

