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Case Study

Primary Health Partners' Direct Care Approach Provides Benefits to Members for Both Utilization and Quality

Overview

Primary care is a crucial component of living longer, healthier lives. Adults in the United States who have an established primary care provider tend to have lower healthcare costs and lower odds of death than those who only utilize specialists¹, and, even further, having more touchpoints with one's primary care physician is associated with lower overall per member per month costs, fewer hospital admissions, and greater adherence to preventative medication use².

The Direct Care approach to delivering primary care services was developed to address and capitalize on these trends. Key components of this model include greater access to primary care services, including both the means of accessing one's PCP (e.g., email, text message, video chats, office visit) as well as through the ability for unlimited visits without an increase to patient cost.

Primary Health Partners, a Direct Primary Care organization based in Yukon, Oklahoma, is helping patients realize the benefits associated with having a relationship with and better access to their primary care provider. Primary Health Partners collaborated with KPI Ninja, the largest analytics organization in the Direct Care space, to analyze data from their Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system and virtual communications tool to identify any demonstrative benefits to the care they provide.

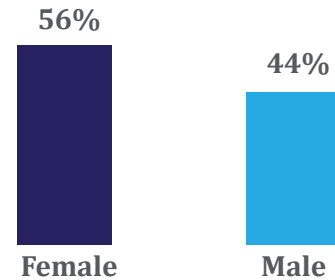
The analysis provides evidence that Primary Health Partners' direct care approach has numerous benefits to its members, which is demonstrated through high utilization and in multiple quality-related measures, especially among those with multiple, complex chronic conditions.

Methodology

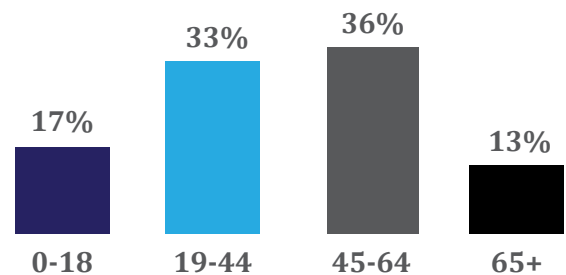
In this analysis, data was collected from both Primary Health Partners' EMR and their virtual communications platform. For all visit- and encounter-related metrics, data ranges from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018. Metrics include data for members who were active during the specified time period.

Member Characteristics

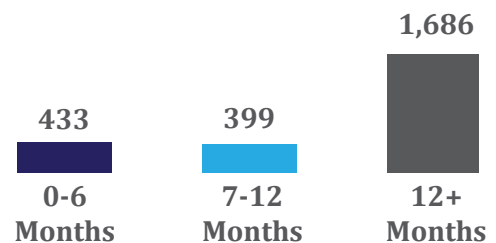
Gender



Age

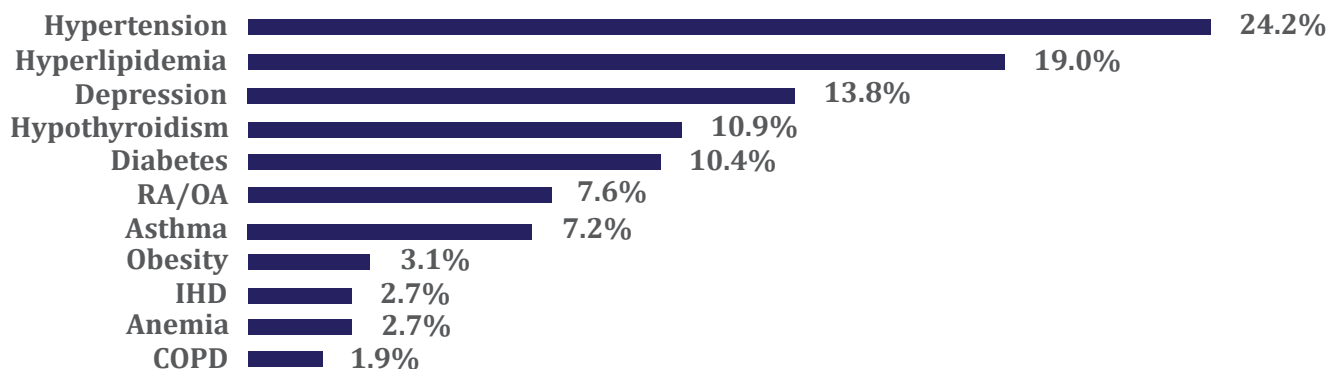


Member Longevity



Percent of Members by Top Chronic Conditions

49.5% of members have at least one chronic condition

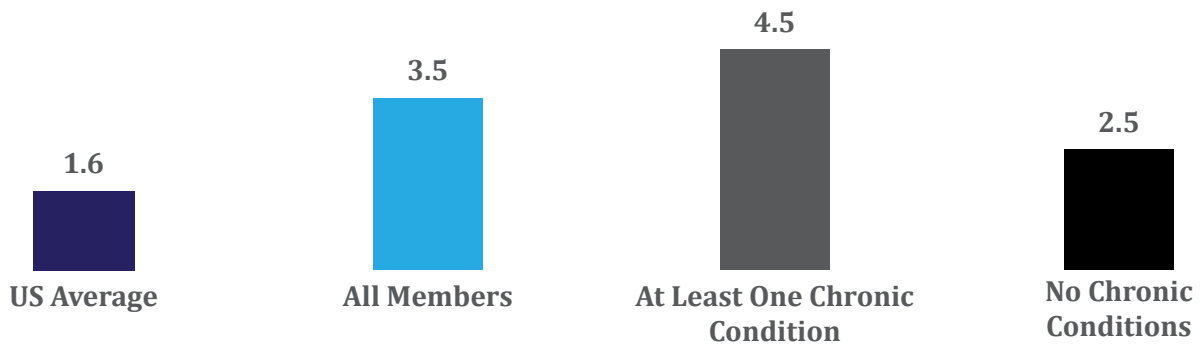


Results: Utilization

In the US, the average person sees a primary care physician around 1.6 times per year³. However, members at Primary Health Partners, on average, see their physician 3.5 times per year, over twice as often. Even more so, members with at least one chronic condition see their physician nearly 4.5 times per year.

Average Number of Visits Per Member Per Year

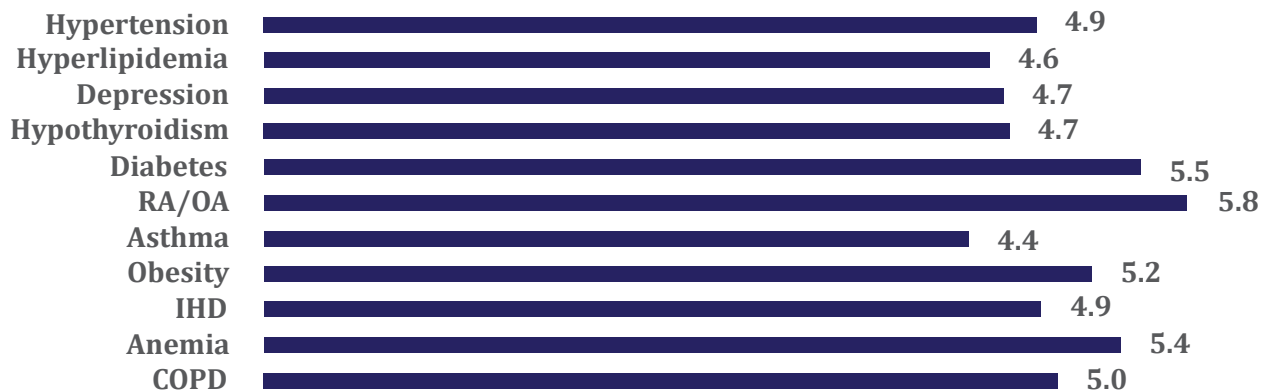
Primary Health Partners members see their physician nearly two more times per year than the typical US citizen



Patients with chronic conditions are often those that require the most attention from healthcare professionals and, therefore, typically have significantly higher healthcare costs. That said, at Primary Health Partners, members with chronic conditions are meeting with their physicians more frequently than those without chronic conditions, ranging from asthmatic patients seeing their physician an average of 4.4 times per year to those with Rheumatoid or Osteoarthritis an average of 5.8 times per year.

Average Number of Visits Per Member Per Year by Top Chronic Conditions

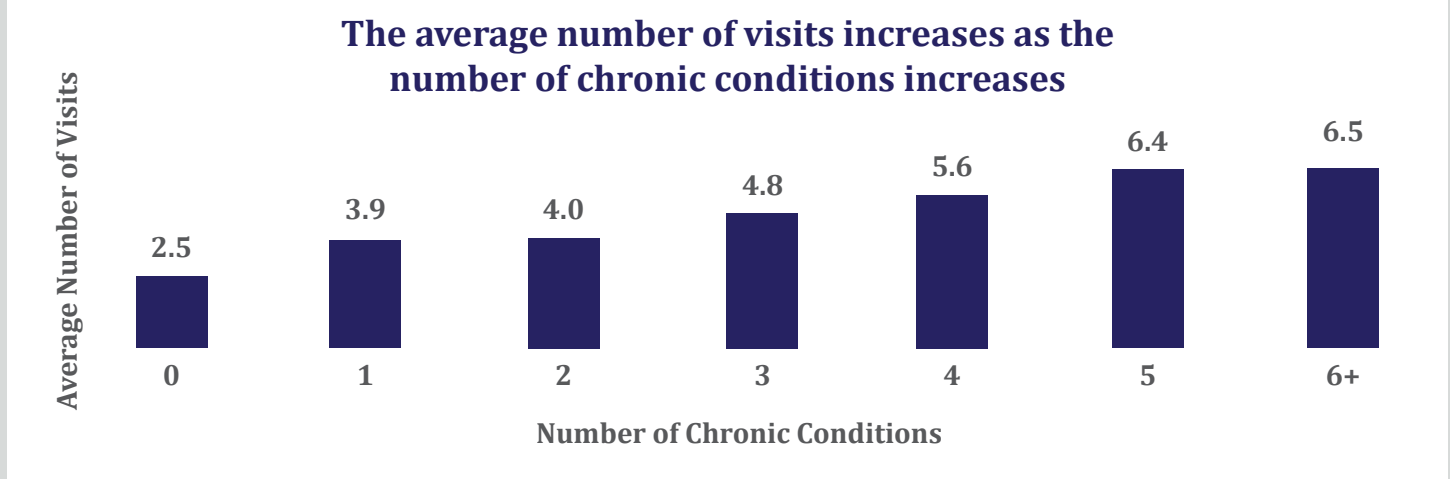
Patients with a chronic condition see their physician more than four times per year, all for the same monthly cost as someone without a chronic condition



Results: Utilization (continued)

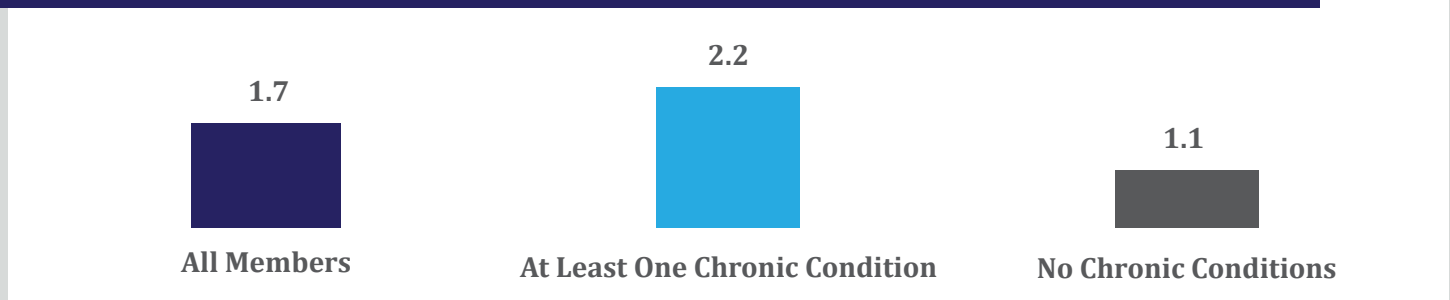
Even more, individuals who have multiple chronic conditions are typically those who need the greatest amount of care. At Primary Health Partners, as the number of chronic conditions an individual member has increases, the average number of visits also tends to increase. This suggests that Primary Health Partners places a strong emphasis on ensuring those with the most complex cases are being seen more frequently.

Average Number of Visits By Number of Chronic Conditions



Aside from physical visits with patients, Primary Health Partners offers their members additional means to communicate with physicians, including text, calls, and video conference calls. Although in-person visits may be the primary contact type, these other options allow members to quickly reach the care or guidance from their physicians when out of state, too sick to visit, questioning whether to go to urgent care or the emergency room, or after typical practice business hours.

Average Number of Virtual Encounters Per Patient Per Year*



*Text messages are counted as conversations from start to finish, not individual text messages.

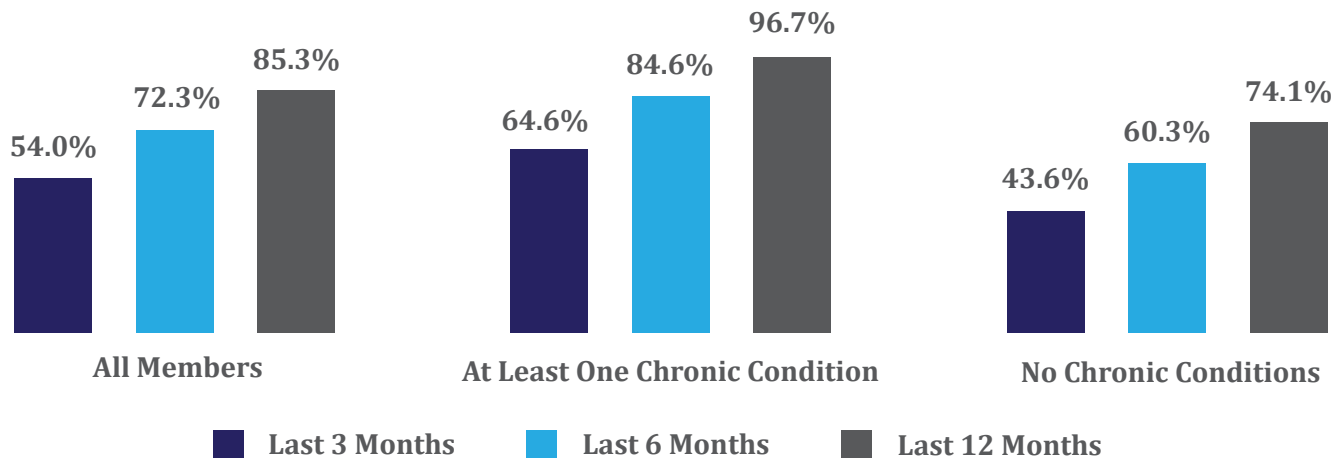
When including both physical and virtual encounters, Primary Health Partners members interact with their primary care physicians more than three times as often as the average US citizen.

Results: Utilization (continued)

For many practices, getting patients to see their primary care physician for an annual visit can be a challenge. According to the Center for Disease Control, 6 in 10 adults in the US have a chronic disease⁴, yet a third of those individuals have not yet been diagnosed⁵, which can result in increased emergency department utilization and higher overall healthcare costs. Many of these chronic conditions can be detected and the associated high costs can be reduced by visiting one's primary care provider on an annual basis. On average, only 64% of US adults see a general practitioner each year⁶. That said, over 85% of Primary Health Partners members had a physical visit with their primary care provider in the past year.

Percent of Patients with a Physical Visit

Members at Primary Health Partners with a chronic condition were 32% more likely to see their primary care physician in the last year than the general US population⁶



When patients do not have timely access to their primary care physician, they often turn to more expensive alternatives to receive the immediate care needed. Such alternatives often include the use of urgent care or even emergency departments, where costs can range anywhere from \$50 to potentially thousands of dollars. These treatment types, while necessary in some circumstances, are not always the levels of care appropriate for the conditions that a patient presents with.

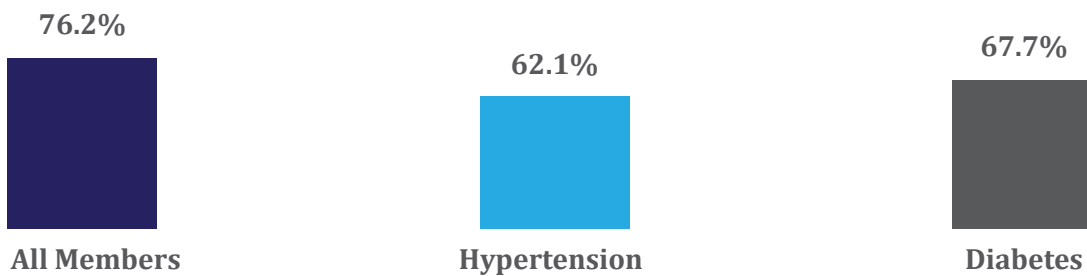
At Primary Health Partners, through the multiple methods that members can use to interact with their physicians, as well as availability after hours, on weekends, on holidays, and with same-day visits, members can quickly receive the care or guidance needed to make the best decision related to their health without necessarily using high cost alternatives. One Primary Health Partners physician documents when a member interaction results in an avoided urgent care or emergency department visit. In 2018 alone, this physician identified 98 urgent care and 11 emergency room visits avoided, saving members an estimated total of \$16,168⁷.

Results: Quality

Four of the most costly and complex chronic conditions that primary care can positively impact through health maintenance, education, and care management include hypertension, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, and obesity. These conditions, if left uncontrolled, can increase the risk of more severe health problems and greater healthcare costs. For hypertension and diabetes, blood pressure needs to be monitored and controlled to reduce the risk of other complications. Among average US adults, less than half of those with hypertension and less than 35% of diabetics have their blood pressure under control⁸. These rates among Primary Health Partners members, however, are much higher.

Percent of Members with Controlled Blood Pressure (Less than 140/90)

The proportion of hypertensive and diabetic patients at Primary Health Partners with controlled blood pressure is over 12 and 32% higher than the rest of the US population, respectively

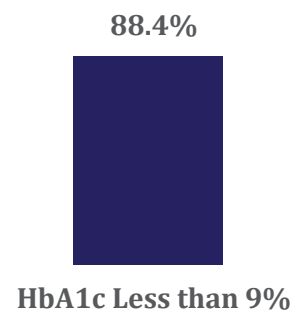


Further, among those members with hypertension whose most recent blood pressure was not controlled, over half have seen some improvement in their blood pressure compared to their previous reading.

Another key metric for patients with diabetes includes Hemoglobin A1c control. Poor A1c control is associated with higher risk of eye, kidney, and nerve diseases, and between 22% and 41% of adults with diabetes in the US (depending on payer) have an A1c reading of greater than 9.0%⁹. At Primary Health Partners, patients with diabetes are much more likely to have their most recent Hemoglobin A1c below 9.0%, which provides evidence of quality care and education provided by their physicians.

Percent of Diabetic Patients with Most Recent HbA1c Less Than 9%

Primary Health Partners' diabetic patients are between 10% and 29% more likely to have their A1c under control



Results: Quality (Continued)

Additionally, Primary Health Partners members with hyperlipidemia tend to have their cholesterol at or below the recommended levels. High cholesterol is associated with elevated risks for heart disease and stroke, two of the top five leading causes of death in the United States¹⁰. Through medication compliance, managing diet, and exercise, people with hyperlipidemia can reduce their cholesterol and, thus, reduce their risk of related complications. At Primary Health Partners, most patients who at one time had a diagnosis of hyperlipidemia now have their symptoms under control.

Like hypertension, diabetes, and hyperlipidemia, obesity can affect and increase the risks of developing more severe health-related conditions. At Primary Health Partners, physicians work closely with members to better understand the benefits of maintaining a healthy weight and monitor their weight loss progress over time.

Percent of Patients with Hyperlipidemia whose Most Recent Total Cholesterol/HDL Ratio is Less Than 5.0

81.7%



Total cholesterol/HDL Ratio Less than 5.0

Percent of Patients with a BMI Greater Than 25 Who Have Lost Weight

Average weight loss for overweight and obese members at Primary Health Partners is 8.21 lbs.

56.4%



BMI Greater than 25: Weight Loss

Conclusion

As identified by the data presented, there are clear benefits and results being achieved by Primary Health Partners that are not being seen in the greater US population. From a utilization standpoint, on average, members see their primary care physician more than twice the average of a typical US citizen, members with complex chronic conditions have greater access to and more visits with their primary care physician compared to members with no chronic conditions, and the percent of patients with an annual exam is 20% higher among Primary Health Partner members than typical US adults.

On the quality side, the benefits of Primary Health Partners continue to show. Members with hypertension and diabetes are more likely to have controlled blood pressure than the general population, members with diabetes tend to have their blood glucose levels more controlled than the general diabetic population, members with hyperlipidemia generally have their cholesterol controlled, and over half of overweight and obese members are losing weight.

The quality-related benefits may be a result of the increased utilization provided by Primary Health Partners, but both are likely to be positively influenced by the direct care approach Primary Health Partners takes. It's this direct care model that allows members to have greater access to physicians as well as allotting physicians more time and resources to provide greater levels of care for their patients.

About Primary Health Partners

Primary Health Partners is a direct primary care medical practice focusing on cost-effective healthcare for employer-sponsored health plans of all sizes and individual patients in the Oklahoma City metro.

With locations in Yukon, Edmond, NW Oklahoma City and a new location opening soon in Moore, Primary Health Partners provides extraordinary primary care service to patients to ensure improved health outcomes while lowering overall plan cost. Instead of going through insurance and charging co-pays, Primary Health Partners charges patients a monthly fee that covers all visits, preventive screenings, and other services. Prescriptions, labs, and more advanced tests are offered to patients at a discounted rate.

One of the biggest reasons patients opt for the direct primary care model is because it allows doctors to have a smaller patient base so they are able to form relationships with their patients. Each patient has a personal physician that they can contact anytime by several methods like text, email, and webcam. They are literally available at any time including after hours, holidays, and weekends. Our Mission is to return to the essence of healthcare, creating a transcendent doctor-patient relationship. To find out more, visit www.primary-healthpartners.com.

About KPI Ninja

KPI Ninja is a leading analytics and performance improvement consulting company. As the largest analytics company in the Direct Care space, KPI Ninja is helping practices and physicians leverage their own data to manage populations, manage businesses processes, and ultimately provide better care. To learn more, visit www.kpininja.com or contact us at info@kpininja.com.

Resources

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16202000>
2. https://ajmc.s3.amazonaws.com/_media/_pdf/AJMC_09_2018_Ghany%20final.pdf
3. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ahcd/namcs_summary/2015_namcs_web_tables.pdf
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/pdf/infographics/chronic-disease-H.pdf>
5. <https://www.guidestoneinsurance.org/AboutUs/Articles/Yearly-Checkup>
6. <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/percent-of-adults-who-had-not-seen-or-talked-to-a-general-doctor-in-the-past-12-months/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>
7. <https://www.debt.org/medical/emergency-room-urgent-care-costs/>
8. http://www.measureuppressuredown.com/PR/highBPStats_pr.asp
9. <https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/comprehensive-diabetes-care/>
10. <https://www.cdc.gov/cholesterol/facts.htm>