



UHC Community Plan of Ohio

Written Testimony: House Subcommittee, HHS

February 24, 2021





Committed to Serving Ohioans

Chairman Roemer, Ranking Member West, and Members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony as the Subcommittee contemplates Medicaid and the larger health care system through the budget process.

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Ohio (UHC) is committed to improving the health and lives of the members we are privileged to serve. We are united behind our mission: to help people live healthier lives and make the health system work better for everyone. UHC is a dedicated partner to both the state and local communities and we leverage our extensive national and enterprise experience to create solutions that meet the needs of Ohioans. In these unprecedented times, significant challenges exist in addressing the health of Ohioans and we are committed to helping our state partners meet the needs through innovations, research, and interventions.



Pandemic Response

UHC is committed to supporting the state's response during the public health emergency. Through our partnership with the Department of Medicaid, we identified needs and gaps and instituted innovative programming and giving. Our investments related to the pandemic in Ohio total over \$4.5 million and our initiatives center on providing support to our members, providers, and the community.

Supporting High-Risk and Vulnerable Members

- Through the **S.T.O.P COVID Initiative**, UHC has invested \$1.5 million in a partnership with community-based organizations and FQHC providers to address health and healthcare disparities with vulnerable minority communities. This initiative hired locally and supplied 3,504 COVID tests, 2,579 health kits, and 1,953 food boxes. For individuals who accessed these services, we ensured they received education to reduce COVID infection and received referrals to social agencies and health care providers to receive essential care.
- UHC's **care management team** directly works with our members to provide personalized support. The team engages on issues including food security, overall support, safety adherence, DME needs, transportation needs for critical services, emotional support, testing and vaccination support, and other needs. As a result of these interventions, our members achieve better management of chronic conditions and reduction in emergency room (ER) admissions and readmissions.
- UHC has expanded use of our existing telehealth platform **Dr. Chat** by outreaching to members at high-risk for COVID. We identified members with a diagnosis that put them at a higher risk for serious complications if they contracted COVID, including members



residing in a combination of rural and socially vulnerable counties, in the congregate living environments, and involved in the justice system.

- UHC is partnering with ODM and ODH in our **vaccine outreach strategy**, targeting high-risk members with the goal to link to local vaccine resources. We are working with providers, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations to understand vaccine distribution plans and support the needs our members.

Meeting Social Determinants of Health Needs

- Food insecurity is an issue for many individuals who are eligible for Medicaid, and it has been exacerbated for many during the pandemic. Through the pandemic, we **provided meals to high-risk pregnant members, formula to infants, and healthy food to members** who were unable to access community resources and continue to link members to resources.
- UHC supports community capacity for combatting food insecurity including a \$85,000 donation to the **Ohio Association of Foodbanks** and \$25,000 donation to **Senior Citizen Resources** to support food deployment efforts.
- UHC is partnering with **PCs for People** to provide hotspot devices and 9 months of unlimited internet for high-risk pregnant moms in Cuyahoga, Trumbull, and Lucas counties – with the intention to address the digital divide and provide access to telehealth services for women when care is vital to a healthy birth outcome.
- UHC has made a financial contribution to **Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO)** to support individuals experiencing homelessness and donated 940 blankets to shelters across the state.
- For members enrolled in our **Housing First** pilot, UHC staff has connected members with reliable food and medical supplies. The Housing First pilot serves our most socially and medically complex members facing homelessness in Cleveland and Akron and deploys a person-centered approach to healthcare and housing needs. Data shows large reductions in ER and inpatient use and a shift to more appropriate care for members involved in the program.

SDOH Action Framework



Partnering with the Provider Community

- Building infrastructure for effective telehealth innovation has been a critical focus of UHC's pandemic response. We worked with **Ohio Children's Alliance** to equip non-profit behavioral health providers and other agencies with equipment to deliver tele-behavioral health services to uninsured, underinsured, and vulnerable youth and provided \$100,000 to support efforts.
- UHC's **Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Transformation Program** is a targeted incentive model that supported providers' need to address the business impact of COVID-19 while investing in transformation efforts that expanded access to care and improved outcomes. Most Ohio FQHCs in the program used the funding to focus on transformative efforts for those living with chronic conditions and addressing

the pandemic, the majority of which built their telehealth and digital engagement capacity. **The FQHC Community Catalyst Program** supports engagement in to address childhood asthma and lead. These efforts invest approximately \$900,000 in these critical safety-net providers.

- UHC's **Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) Transformation Program** is another targeted incentive model that supports providers' need to address the business impact of COVID-19 with approximately \$1.4 million invested.
- UHC has worked to support the administrative process and alleviate financial burden for Ohio's providers.
 - At the start of the pandemic, UHC **accelerated \$2 Billion in payments** to care providers across the country to help with COVID-19 financial challenges. An estimated \$54.4 million of those accelerated payments were for Ohio providers.
 - Our team is **dedicated to ensuring flexibility** during this time including reviewing of accounts receivable for pressured providers to ensure timely payment and providing benefit and billing updates from UHC (telehealth, co-pays, etc.) as they evolve. UHC assists with telehealth process flow, service updates, testing/coding/reimbursement guidance, prior authorization, ongoing patient care guidance, member coverage updates, and practice administration updates.

Collaborating to Meet Community and Member Needs

- UHC is partnering with the **Ohio Suicide Prevention Coalition** on awareness efforts, including an investment of \$100,000 to support virtual and in-person mental health first aid training and signs of suicide training for youth and staff at youth-serving organizations. UHC is also enhancing suicide prevention awareness for members and providers.
- UHC has expanded our behavioral health support to support members and providers.
 - Expanded use of the **Mindstrong** program- text-based cognitive behavioral therapy for people living with a serious mental illness. We continue to evaluate the potential capabilities and outcomes for members using this intervention.
 - Partnered with **OhioGuidestone** to deploy expanded behavioral telehealth capabilities for members. OhioGuidestone provides members with iPads for patients that do not have video capabilities on their phone or may have limited data plans on their phones.
 - Worked with **Bright Heart Health**, a comprehensive telehealth company with offerings of addiction services, chronic pain management, and telehealth with medication assisted treatment to enable virtual visits using Bright Heart Health technology.
 - Deployed **Sanvello Health**, a UnitedHealth Group company and leading provider of digital and tele-mental health solutions, to offer free premium access to its digital care delivery platform.
 - Developed **social isolation response** strategy through work with community stakeholders, development of a community resource guide, incorporation into care management approach, and volunteer efforts. This effort targeted individuals including seniors that were at risk for isolation.
- UHC deployed over 80,000 **face masks** to community partners including food banks, homeless shelters, FQHCs, and community agencies and for high-risk members. UHC donated 25,000 N-95 masks and hand sanitizer to our provider partners

- UHC donated \$95,000 to support the **Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund**. The pool of funding is distributed on a bi-weekly basis to nonprofit organizations on the frontlines of addressing the needs resulting from COVID-19 for the most vulnerable and disproportionately impacted communities and populations in Cuyahoga, Lake, and Geauga counties.
- UHC supports **continued all Managed Care Plan collaboration** including resources to support restored citizens, immunizations and well child visits, telehealth, and overall pandemic response.



Innovative Programs

Ohio is facing many significant challenges and new barriers to better health will continue to emerge. The state requires partners dedicated to addressing these challenges. At UHC, we continually drive innovative ways to address the challenges that our members face. Using different data sources and tools to improve our approach, we maintain and improve quality through practical and creative problem-solving, rooted in quality-improvement science.

Enhancing the Role of Pharmacists

Recognizing the pharmacist as a critical member of the patient care team, UHC, in collaboration with the **Ohio Pharmacists Association (OPA)**, announced an initiative enhancing the role of pharmacists in early 2020. The **Pharmacy Care Extension Program** creates a partnership with community pharmacists to expand patient access to care, relieve pressure on health systems, and help drive better health outcomes for Medicaid members.

- UHC is partnering with two pharmacies to implement a test of change that enables payment for a broader range of services.
- This program aims to include pharmacists within the broader care team and encourages pharmacists to operate at the top of their license.

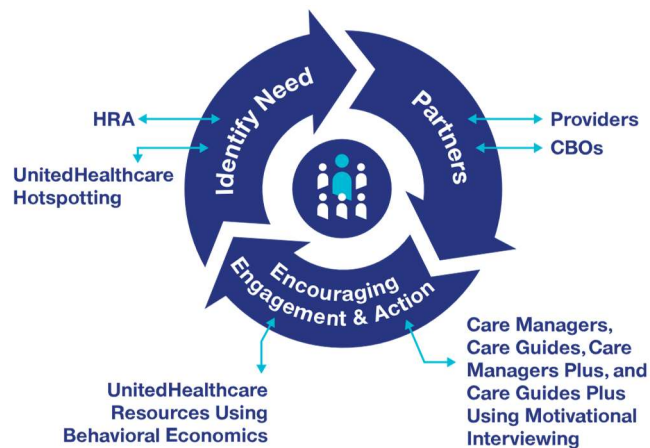
Initial outcomes include better medication adherence, additional health care challenges identified and addressed, and improved health and quality of life for members.

Improving Health Outcomes for Underserved Cleveland Residents

Through an innovative partnership, UHC is providing \$500,000 in funding and collaborating with **MetroHealth** to expand two programs addressing social determinants of health for underserved populations in the greater Cleveland area. The three-year collaboration expands initiatives targeted at high-risk pregnant mothers and medically complex patient populations. Both

programs provide or connect participants to wrap-around services such as housing support and food assistance, as well as financial and employment resources to improve health outcomes.

The funding from UHC enables MetroHealth to increase capacity for MetroHealth’s Red Carpet



Care program for patients who frequently visit the ER, track patient outcomes, as well as identify drivers of poor outcomes. MetroHealth’s Mom & Baby Bundle program brings providers and community-based organizations together to support pregnant women and their infants who are at higher risk for poor birth outcomes, including those with opioid use disorder and those experiencing housing insecurity. The program identifies and engages at-risk patients and establishes connections to needed resources in a team-based care

environment. UHC and MetroHealth will collaborate to design and test effective care management strategies based on program findings, which will have a direct impact on members in the Cleveland area.

Utilizing Value Based Payment (VBC) to Transform Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) Ecosystem

Though medication assisted treatment (MAT) is the known evidence-based treatment for individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD), utilization remains low. To connect individuals with OUD to appropriate care, more high-quality MAT providers are necessary. Individuals experience their lives across complex and fragmented sectors. To better align resources for these members in the community, UHC has created targeted **micro-incentive payment models** to enable providers to deliver comprehensive, evidence-based OUD treatment where people already receive care (primary care physician, OB-GYN). These payment models not only directly fund evidence-based treatment and related supports, but through this funding, we also seek to build additional capacity at the provider level. UHC has partnered with **Summa Health** in Northeast Ohio to deploy this model.

Initial outcomes include higher patient engagement, increased adherence with MAT, and continued collaboration to enhance best practices.



Contact Information

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Ohio (UHC) is honored to serve more than 334,000 Ohioans in Medicaid and over 26,000 in MyCare Ohio. Over the last year, through challenging times, we have seen enrollment growth of over 54,000 Ohioans in both programs, with the vast majority being served in the Medicaid program. UHC values our partnership with the Ohio Department of Medicaid and is committed to helping address the challenges members face. Our shared goal is to empower members to achieve their optimal health and wellness and support strong community and provider connections.

On behalf of the over 300 employees of the UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Ohio, thank you for the opportunity to highlight some successful and innovative initiatives and partnerships that we employ to care for our members and the community at large. It's a privilege to work with the State of Ohio to serve Ohioans in need. As CEO of the plan, I am happy to provide more information or answer any questions that the committee may have.

Mike Roaldi