

# Community Stories



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CASE STUDY: MARY & ANGELA

## A Life Reimagined



### An older member who felt alone in the world gains services, support, and a whole new outlook on life.

Mary is an elderly resident of greater Milwaukee who suffers from a multitude of health concerns, including dementia, diabetes and vascular disease. Because of her medical conditions, when she became a member of the UnitedHealthcare® Community Plan™ of Wisconsin, she also qualified for case management services.

#### Dedicated case managers

Fortunately for Mary, the Plan is staffed with truly dedicated and expert case managers — including Angela. So when Angela called to check on her — and learned that Mary lived alone, lacked transportation and had not seen a doctor in three years — she wasted no time.

To meet the immediate need, Angela arranged for Mary's transportation to her doctor appointments and for home delivery of her medications.

#### No family support

After a home visit, Angela realized that Mary needed more help to live safely. She reached out to Mary's three daughters but, sadly, her calls went unanswered. Mary just shrugged it off. "My daughters are just busy," she said.

Angela, who normally works telephonically, made nine trips to Mary's home — a considerable trek of 50 miles round-trip.

She helped to organize her medication box and accompanied her to all of her doctor appointments.

#### No food in the house

Angela also realized that Mary had little food in the house. Proper nutrition is essential for those suffering from diabetes, so Angela paid for groceries out of her own pocket until Meals On Wheels could be arranged.

#### Transition to Family Care Plan

Mary had forgotten to pay bills and her utilities were on the brink of being shut off, prompting Angela to arrange an assessment for Mary to transition to a Family Care Plan. This plan, offered through the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, allows Mary to stay in her home safely by providing her with the personal care assistance she needs on a daily basis.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT PROGRAM

## Smart Community Outreach Makes Healthy Eating Fun.

When a food – yes, even a vegetable – is associated with **Sesame Street™**, children are far more willing to try it.

Armed with this knowledge and the innovative Food for Thought: Eating Well on a Budget program, the Community Plan of Wisconsin set out to improve the health and wellness of its Plan members.



Partners in Healthy Habits for Life

POOR FOOD CHOICE IS ASSOCIATED WITH A RANGE OF HEALTH ISSUES.

**1 in 3**

**CHILDREN IN THE U.S. IS OBESE OR OVERWEIGHT.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup>Source: Sesame Workshop



**CHILDREN ARE AT RISK** of lifelong chronic conditions including hypertension, heart disease and diabetes.

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<sup>1</sup>Health plan coverage provided by UnitedHealthcare of Wisconsin, Inc., a licensed HMO in the state of Wisconsin

FOOD FOR THOUGHT PROGRAM continued

## Innovative Food for Thought Program

Many Wisconsin Plan members have chronic health conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease, which are aggravated by poor nutrition.

Members make poor food choices for myriad reasons. Some may have cultural attachments to less healthy foods. Others may not have access to fresh produce, or may be unable to afford it. Their unhealthy eating habits become ingrained, contributing to a host of health problems.

### Support from state nutritionist

As part of our community outreach work, our Plan began offering the Food for Thought program to community-based organizations (CBOs), in partnership with the state's University of Wisconsin-Extension Nutrition Program.

### Participation across 16 counties

To date, the Wisconsin team has offered its tailored Food for Thought program in 16 counties throughout the state, and 2,300 children have graduated. Every site has asked for the program to return.



### Partnering with Sesame Street™

Food for Thought: Eating Well on a Budget is a program in partnership with *Sesame Workshop*™ that teaches families to make food choices that are affordable, nutritional and set a foundation for lifelong healthy habits.

### Partnering with Head Start

Initially, the Plan considered simply distributing the program to members at events. But the team decided to take a more hands-on approach. They focused their efforts on children attending Head Start, and developed two in-classroom, tailored curriculums in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Extension and its nutritionist.

But reaching students in the classroom wasn't enough. They wanted to reach parents and families, too. So the team created an activity checklist that

The Food for Thought program has a large impact on the way children learn about healthy eating. The "Eating the Rainbow" lesson is one of the best received lessons. The children love to see all the colors on their plate and are more likely to eat a variety of colors because of seeing the video.

encourages families to try new foods, including fruits and veggies, and to enjoy mealtimes together.

At the end of the program, parents and children come together for a "family" meal. Children receive their graduation gift at this event. Parents are able to connect with one another and share ideas, and leave feeling empowered and motivated to be proactive in their own health and preventive care.

### Fresh produce from local farmers

The Plan also partners with local farmers markets to help families take advantage of locally grown produce. Community engagement staff set up booths in the markets, offering nutritional presentations and information on Food for Thought. At markets participating in the FoodShare payment program, participants can even purchase healthful, fresh produce using their debit cards or tokens.

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT PROGRAM GRADUATES FOUND THAT PARENTS:

48%

REPORTED THEIR CHILD MORE WILLING TO TASTE NEW FOODS

44%

REPORTED THEIR CHILD EATING MORE VEGETABLES

56%

WILL BUY MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Based on a recent survey of Food for Thought program graduates from Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin

## COMMUNITY REWARDS RESULTS

4%



FEWER ER VISITS

66%

MORE LIKELY TO COMPLETE HEDIS ACTIVITIES

12%

LOWER CLAIM COSTS



4.3%  
LIFT IN HEDIS SCORES

COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

## Changing Families' Unhealthy Habits

"Prevention is worth a pound of cure." – Ben Franklin

Perhaps at no time in our nation's history has the famous Franklin quote rung more true. With chronic — and often preventable — diseases like diabetes and heart disease at an all-time high, the prospect of adding future generations of chronically ill Americans to an already struggling health care system is daunting. Prevention is no longer just an option; it's a necessity.

### Case in point: Wisconsin

In 2013, the state's rates of diabetes and death from cardiovascular disease were even higher than the already sky-high national average. Nearly 30 percent of Wisconsinites were obese, and 20 percent reported doing no physical activity other than what was required for their jobs.<sup>3</sup>

### Preventing poor health habits

Few would argue that preventing chronic diseases and poor health habits would have a significant impact on the state's overall health — as well as health care costs. But prevention requires healthy habits, preferably starting at a young age. And that's a difficult thing to implement.

### Health habits are handed down.

Many of the pediatric members in the Community Plan of Wisconsin were starting life without basic health care or the guidance to make healthy choices. This is because their families — facing financial or physical challenges — had poor health habits.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.americashealthrankings.org/WI>

### Developing healthy habits

To reach these families and help them develop healthy habits, the Plan piloted an innovative, "smartphone-driven" incentive program for kids ages 13 and under. UnitedHealthcare Community Rewards™ provides a fun, rewarding way for kids to learn good health habits like brushing their teeth, washing their hands, eating healthy foods and engaging in physical activity.

"This is one of the most innovative programs we've launched in our state," said Stephanie Waite, the Plan's associate director of product and network management.

### Activities earn points

The program has three tiers: Everyday Health, Using Your Insurance and Regular Checkups. Everyday Health actions are self-reported, while the others are claims-verified. For each activity completed in a tier, participants can earn, accumulate and track points online and redeem them for merchandise rewards like a camera or bicycle. Parents can help earn points by using their Welcome Kit, reading the member newsletter, trying NurseLine<sup>SM</sup> and taking their children to well-child visits.

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“ Families have embraced this program. We are seeing a real increase in children getting vaccinations and getting their well-baby checkups, for example. That's the best way to prevent problems down the road, and it's increasing our HEDIS scores. ”

CASE STUDY: MARY & ANGELA

**A Life Reimagined** continued

As a result of Angela's exceptional service, Mary's health has now stabilized. She hasn't required in-patient care for nearly a year — the entire time that she received case management services — a rarity for someone with her complex health conditions.

Like all of our Plan's case managers, Angela embodies the UnitedHealthcare mission of helping people live healthier lives. She saw a member in need and went to work, offering assistance above and beyond the call of duty.

**All in a day's work**

Mary's quality of life has been transformed because of one woman's compassion and commitment. To Angela, it's all in a day's work.



**3 TO 1 COST SAVINGS**

For the cost of 1 person in a skilled nursing facility, home- and community-based services can serve 3.

COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

**Changing Families' Unhealthy Habits** continued

**Promising results**

The results already look promising. Since the rollout of the Community Rewards program, 2,468 members were enrolled in the program, with participation rates at 17 percent.

By reaching members on their mobile phones, engaging them in fun ways, and rewarding them for positive activity, Community Rewards is helping change the course of their health care future. Wisconsin is reducing children's risk for chronic disease as well as reducing medical costs for entire families and, potentially, generations of families — as well as the nation itself.

**STATISTICS 2013**

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