

# Self Regional Healthcare uses analytics and care management to help improve employee health



**Case Study**



**BUSINESS  
CARE  
CONNECTIVITY**

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Self Regional Healthcare, a referral medical center serving a seven-county region in South Carolina, is an award-winning provider known for its commitment to patient health. The center also ranks as one of the nation's best healthcare workplaces according to Modern Healthcare <sup>1</sup>, and is a six-time Gallup Great Workplace <sup>2</sup>. So it should come as no surprise that the center decided to learn about population health through an innovative accountable care pilot program benefitting some of its 1,900 employees.

Recognizing the accountable care (ACO) trend in the healthcare industry, Self Regional's leadership wanted to prepare. "Our goal has been to put all the pieces and components in place to be ready to function as an ACO should the need arise, starting with our employee healthcare costs and taking on the role of a risk-bearer," says Keith Gillespie, ACO project manager.

To get started, the center identified a pilot group of 50 high-risk employees and beneficiaries for an advanced care management program. By strategically investing more money upfront in population health, Self Regional hopes to recapture healthcare costs in later years through overall better health for its self-insured population.

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# Challenges

To begin, Self Regional needed to identify the intervention group and provide the program's advanced care manager with ongoing visibility into the health of these patients. The third-party administrator (TPA) that managed claims for the center's employee benefits plan provided aggregate cost reports, but not accessible patient-centered data. Although Self Regional knew its ED frequent flyers, the center lacked visibility into population health, cost drivers and patient-specific usage among its membership.

## Results

- Ability to stratify patients by risk
- Targeted 15% reduction in risk scores
- Better employee health and productivity
- Quick access to patient data
- New population health experience



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## Answers

Self Regional chose McKesson Risk Manager™, a clinical business intelligence tool, to consolidate data from providers and claims, in conjunction with health risk assessment data, to help identify its higher risk members. “We were looking for a vendor who was really committed to accountable care and building a solid product,” Gillespie says. “McKesson had the leadership to interact with our hospital administration to guide us in this new endeavor.”

Without McKesson Risk Manager, the challenge of sorting through the data using spreadsheets would have been tedious at best, explained David Isenhower, MD, medical director and chief medical informatics officer.

McKesson Risk Manager now serves as the focal point to identify and stratify high-risk patients and to track ongoing patient costs and utilization.



Self Regional offers both carrots and sticks to encourage healthy living. Employees can choose between two tiers of premiums, based on their health status and behaviors. The self-care premium for low-risk employees is only a third of the price of the regular premium, but offers the same benefits.

Members in the pilot project receive the self-care discount despite having numerous risk factors, as long as they agree to several health-promoting requirements. They must wear a pedometer, test as nicotine free, participate in an employee health assessment and see a primary care physician annually—as well as follow through on any advice given by their health coach. If patients don't abide by the terms, their premiums increase 300 percent to the regular rate.

## Organization

Self Regional Healthcare  
Greenwood, SC

- Not-for-profit, regional referral hospital
- 2,400 employees
- 4,000 plan members

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The pilot project's care manager, Cyndi New, has been tasked with working closely with the group of 50 to facilitate healthy choices and to identify barriers that could be removed. To promote better health, Self Regional is willing to make several long-term upfront investments, including providing drugs and insulin pumps, without co-payments, for better diabetes management, as well as gym memberships, nutrition counseling, support groups and personal trainers at no charge to the employees.

One example of the project's impact is an employee who couldn't afford the full dose of insulin and tried to get by with less, resulting in a week-long inpatient stay due to diabetic complications. After joining the pilot project, the patient now receives all the necessary insulin at no charge, along with twice-a-week sessions with a personal trainer and other services. As a result, the patient's diabetes management has improved substantially, reducing the likelihood of readmission.

"What we've found is that the key to achieving better health is to uncover and address the chokepoints that were previously keeping people from improving their health—even if it required us to make a significant upfront investment in their long-term health," says Isenhower. "From this pilot project, we'll be able to compare where they were and where they go—and at what cost."



## Critical Issues

- Inability to stratify patients by risk
- Inexperience with accountable care
- Lack of insight into pharmacy costs

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<sup>1</sup> Modern Healthcare (2011–2013)

<sup>2</sup> 2008-2013, [http://www.selfregional.org/announcements/9-6-2013\\_Self\\_Regional\\_One\\_of\\_Nations\\_Best\\_Places\\_To\\_Work\\_In\\_Healthcare.asp](http://www.selfregional.org/announcements/9-6-2013_Self_Regional_One_of_Nations_Best_Places_To_Work_In_Healthcare.asp)

## Results

Self is targeting a 15 percent reduction in risk scores for pilot participants, and plans to expand the group from 50 to 250 high risk participants in 2014. In addition, McKesson Risk Manager is helping to pinpoint the highest cost drugs and other cost drivers for cost reduction.

**“What we’ve found is that the key to achieving better health is to uncover and address the chokepoints that were previously keeping people from improving their health – even if it required us to make a significant upfront investment in their long-term health. From this pilot project, we’ll be able to compare where they were and where they go — and at what cost.”**

— Dr. David Isenhower  
medical director  
Self Regional Healthcare



### Contact us

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The program has also helped Self Regional's reputation as a thought leader in its community.

Management has been approached by area employers interested in implementing similar programs, as well as by a school district wanting to explore innovation in student PE and health education programs.

Beyond crunching numbers, the accountable care pilot at Self Regional Healthcare is demonstrating how healthcare analytics can be used to improve patient outcomes. Care manager New explains, “Our work with these 50 patients is changing lives — and changing generations. We are giving them the tools to teach their kids better than they’ve been taught.”

## Solution Spotlight

• McKesson Risk Manager™

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