UnitedHealthcare Community Plan

The E² Strategy – Shared Decision Making

We've implemented a new initiative, called the E² Strategy, to help enhance communication between members and their care providers. We're hoping these improved discussions will help members take a more active role in the health care decision making process.

How it Works

With the E² Strategy, we provide UnitedHealthcare Community Plan members with various educational materials, giving members the tools to help them communicate more effectively with their care providers.

We also encourage members to bring a family member or friend to their appointments if this makes them more comfortable and helps them communicate more effectively.

During health appointments, we encourage members to ask their care provider one or more of the following questions related to their current condition and treatment options:

1. Evaluation of Current Condition
   a. What is my main problem?
   b. What do you think is most important for us to accomplish during my visit today?
   c. What would you like to know about how I am doing with my condition?
   d. What concerns you the most about my condition?

2. Possible Outcomes/Consequences of Treatment Options
   a. What do I need to do?
   b. Why is it important for me to do this?
   c. How important do you think it is for me to do [X treatment or self-management task] to manage or treat my condition?
   d. Knowing me and where I am with my condition, what do you recommend I do next? What else?
   e. What, in your opinion, might get in the way of my success?
   f. Would you like me to tell you about the troubles I am having taking the medications you prescribed?

Why We Started the E² Strategy

Our members have the opportunity to report their experiences with our care providers and the health care plan as part of the annual Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey. The CAHPS survey is a federal government tool administered by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The CAHPS survey helps UnitedHealthcare Community Plan evaluate the effectiveness of communication between members and their health care providers. The survey asks members if they feel they are included or share in the decision making process related to their care.

The specific questions include:

1. In the last six months, when there was more than one choice for your treatment or health care, did a doctor or other health provider ask which choice you thought was best for you?

2. In the last six months, did you and a doctor or other health provider discuss the reasons you might want to take a specific medication to treat your condition?

3. In the last six months, did you and a doctor or other health provider discuss the reasons why you might not want to take a specific medication to treat your condition?

The most recent CAHPS survey results indicated that some UnitedHealthcare Community Plan members ranked care providers lower in the shared decision making process than most other health plan providers. This was especially true for those representing our pediatric members. To help address this, we created the E^2 Strategy, which aims to help change this perception and get our members more involved in their treatment plans.

What We're Hoping to Achieve
With this new initiative, we're seeking to:

- Encourage members and providers to look beyond the member's presented condition to help determine if there are other factors that may affect the proposed treatment plan.

- Empower our members to engage their care providers in conversations about the best treatment options for them.

- Help care providers gather clear and concise information from members related to their current condition.

- Encourage the member to increase communications with their care provider so they can work together to develop a treatment plan that the member agrees is best for them and their current condition.

How You Can Help
We strongly encourage care providers to engage in discussions with our members, their patients, to consider factors that may have an effect on the success of the member's treatment plan.

Some important questions to consider include the following:
1. Is the member aware of all possible treatment plan outcomes? Are these outcomes acceptable based on the member's current condition?
2. Is it possible there is more than one problem causing the current issue?
3. How long will it take for the member to recover and is there adequate social support in place to facilitate recovery?
4. Are there additional costs that will impact the member related to the treatment plan?
5. Does the member have the right to seek a second opinion related to treatment?

You may also use probing questions to encourage members to openly share information about other contributing factors that may affect their health and any subsequent treatment plans. Examples of these questions include:

1. What ideas do you have about what is contributing to your problem?
2. What ideas do you have about the treatment or things you can do to help manage your condition?
3. Is there anything I should know that will help us develop the best treatment plan for you?

Additional Online Resources

We encourage you to visit the following websites to help you stay informed:

- Institute for Healthcare Improvement: ihi.org
- National Patient Safety Foundation: npsf.org
- The Conversation Project: theconversationproject.org

We're Here to Help

If you have any additional questions concerning the E^2 Strategy, please contact your Provider Advocate.

Thank you for the care and services you provide to our members.