Healthier Moms, Healthier Babies

How adding maternity management can help cut costs and raise productivity

Integrating a maternity management program into a health plan is a win-win for moms-to-be and employers. Members who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant can join the program to get the support they need to help them have healthier pregnancies and healthier babies.

"Every pregnancy is unique, that is why maternity management programs offer personalized support from the start of the pregnancy until after the birth of the baby," says Judy Dawson, HealthLink Sales & Retention Executive. "This personalized support can help keep pregnant members healthy, reduce their need for unscheduled or emergent care, and keep their medical costs down."

What are the overall goals of a maternity management program?
The number one goal of a maternity management program is to reduce risks associated with preterm delivery and low birth weight and encourage members to be more active in health-related decisions during pregnancy. To achieve this, the program focuses on educating and supporting pregnant members from prenatal to newborn care. Members who enroll in a maternity management program are sent educational materials and can receive customized help from nurse care managers so they can understand what is best for them and their babies. Members also get access to a 24-hour, toll-free nurse line so they can connect with someone who can

answer their questions or direct them to their best option for care.

How does a maternity management program impact members?
A maternity management program can have a great impact on a member's pregnancy and their newborn. Once they join the program, they are assigned a nurse care manager that can provide a number of services, including giving moms-to-be information on healthy eating and exercise, providing education and information on labor options, helping smokers quit, checking for health risks, screening for depression during and after pregnancy and more. Every service is focused on healthier moms and healthier babies and can be customized to fit the unique needs of the mom-to-be. The educational materials alone can really impact the decisions a pregnant member makes during the course of their pregnancy and delivery, and the added support can make a big difference in helping members feel prepared and confident as they approach parenthood. For members who may not have all the support they need at home, a maternity management program can make a huge impact.

What are the benefits to the employer?
Like many supplementary, cost-management programs, a maternity management program can help members achieve optimal health outcomes in a cost-effective and timely

manner. This can lower costs for the plan and for the member. There are a variety of studies that have shown that maternity management can lower inpatient costs, reduce the number of low-birth weight babies that require additional care and lower neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) costs by reducing NICU admissions.

In addition to the cost-reduction benefits, offering a maternity management program is a great way to provide additional support to members as they go through a series of life-changing events. When members feel supported, it can boost morale and even productivity, and in the case of moms-to-be, it can make a huge impact on their overall health and their transition back into the workforce.

What else should employers know?
Maternity management programs may not be a good fit for all companies. Employers should consider the potential impact offering the program will have on members before implementing a maternity management program. For example, if a company has a largely older or all-male population, it may not make sense to add the program. Many maternity management programs are purchased on a per employee per month (PEPM) basis, so it's important for employers to determine if the outcome is worth the investment. Employers should talk to their broker or network partner to explore all of their health and wellness and cost management options.