

## from the front page

### Can What's Happening in The Villages Change Health Care Across America?

"The rest of the country, and indeed, some of the rest of the world, is taking a look at this program called The Villages Health – which became revolutionary and now I call it visionary – to see what the outcome is. That is one of the goals – to see how we can better deliver health care services, at a better cost with better outcomes. We're demonstrating that right here in The Villages."

**DON HAHNFELDT**  
chairman, Central Florida Health Alliance board of directors

"I think this can change health care elsewhere. I think we're going to take these learnings and adjust them and adapt a little bit to other environments. But I really do believe that it's an opportunity to take some of the best and take it places."

**STEVE NELSON**  
CEO of UnitedHealthcare Medicare & Retirement

"Absolutely. This is a major step forward toward transforming the face of health care. We are going to change the world and this shows that we're already on our way to doing it."

**DR. ROBERT REILLY**  
medical director, Creekside Care Center

"We're hoping it will. If you have the better mousetrap, why wouldn't other people want to look at it? I think we have the best mousetrap going right now."

**DR. SAUL ROSENBLUM**  
medical director, Santa Barbara Care Center

"The portability of this model can be expanded. This is all something that will change the way that health care is delivered. This is on the cutting edge of new models of transforming how care is delivered."

**PETE CLARKSON**  
CEO of North/Central Florida for UnitedHealthcare Medicare & Retirement

#### WHAT IS CAHPS?

Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems surveys ask consumers and patients to report on and evaluate their experiences with health care. These surveys cover topics that are important to consumers and focus on aspects of quality that consumers are best qualified to assess, such as the communication skills of providers and ease of access to health-care services. Users of CAHPS survey results include patients and consumers, quality monitors and regulators, provider organizations, health plans, community collaboratives, and public and private purchasers of health care. These individuals and organizations use the survey results to make decisions and to improve the quality of health care services.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

#### WHAT IS HEDIS?

The Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set is a tool that is used by more than 90 percent of America's health plans to measure performance on important dimensions of care and service. Altogether, HEDIS consists of 81 measures across five domains of care. Because so many plans collect HEDIS data, and because the measures are so specifically defined, it is possible to compare the performance of health plans on an "apples-to-apples" basis.

Source: National Committee for Quality Assurance

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### HEALTH

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All told, UnitedHealth Group boasts 70 million customers and nearly 1 in 5 Medicare beneficiaries. The company also is the largest Medicare Advantage provider in the country, with networks and partnerships located in all 50 states.

For an organization that stresses patient-centered care and the importance of preventive measures to be ranked No. 1 in the Sunshine State and among the best across the country clearly is validation that the health care initiative here is on the right track, Nelson said of The Villages Health, which formed in 2012.

"What we're doing here is exactly the right thing to do," he added. "That's why I'm really excited about the future."

According to Pete Clarkson, CEO of North/Central Florida for UnitedHealthcare Medicare & Retirement,

the award recognizes The Villages Health for a variety of successes, including the ability to close care gaps for Medicare Advantage members by encouraging them to access important preventive health care services.

Clarkson added that a large part of the criteria also was based on national rankings, such as the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey and the Health Care Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) – a standard set of measurements that primarily are focused around screenings and used by more than 90 percent of America's health plans to measure performance. "All of those are designed so that the physician is equipped with the tools and information that they need to have in order to be able to coordinate care effectively," Clarkson said. "And The Villages Health system has knocked it out of the park."

Overall, Clarkson pointed out that The Villages Health

scored a 9.2 rating out of a possible 10 in the CAHPS patient satisfaction survey. And the organization exceeded targets in 14 of 17 HEDIS measures – 12 of which were superior five-star ratings.

"It's just impressive work," he said, pointing out that the data used was from 2014 – the first year The Villages Health was graded in the national rankings. "For a newly organized physician group – a group of physicians that are working together for the first time in a coordinated-care program – to be able to achieve these kinds of results is unheard of."

Clarkson, who has been involved with The Villages Health since its inception, said the high national rankings prove that stressing preventive care – a cornerstone of Medicare Advantage plans – is a much better health care model than just treating patients when they are sick.

"There've been times when we've had doubts and said, 'Is this going to produce better

health outcomes?'" Clarkson said. "Today, we have the results that can demonstrate that. And that's big, because it means you're doing the right thing."

For physicians like Dr. Joe Hildner, director of medical affairs for The Villages Health, receiving the prestigious award and seeing such high national rankings proves the organization is on the right path to creating America's Healthiest Hometown here.

"This is a good example to show there's another way to do this doctoring thing," he said with a smile. "If you focus on keeping people healthy and well, there's reward in that."

Dr. Jeffrey Lowenkron, chief medical officer of The Villages Health, agreed.

"This is really validation for all the hard work everybody's done," he said. "When you have everybody working toward a common mission to improve the health and well-being of the community that we serve, it's nice to see that it's really working."

### HONORS

Continued from A1

UnitedHealthcare has been The Villages Health's exclusive Medicare Advantage partner since the health care organization's inception in 2012. The award recognizes providers in the insurer's vast network for closing care gaps for Medicare Advantage members by encouraging them to access important preventive health care services.

It also was based on high national rankings. The Villages Health earned in patient satisfaction and quality outcomes – achievements that put the initiative atop UnitedHealthcare's network in Florida and among the top 4 percent in the nation.

According to Dr. Saul Rosenblum, medical director of the Santa Barbara Care Center, that honor is a validation that Medicare Advantage, which stresses preventive care through screenings and other methods, is good for seniors.

"This is tremendous," he said. "It's a recognition of what we've tried to accomplish. It's support and nourishment for what we want to do as physicians and health care providers."

Dr. Laura Cloukey, medical director of the Pinellas Care Center, echoed that sentiment, adding that she

believes improved health care outcomes that are measurable will become the standard nationally that others try to achieve.

"You can't be healthy without preventive care because if you can't catch it before it hits, there's no prevention at all," she said. "Then you're stuck with a disease. That limits you in what you can and cannot do. And then there goes your whole dream."

Reilly said the award is recognition of the hard work put in by every single Villages Health staff member.

"It's the check in, the check out – the folks who do the diligent work in the trenches every day," he said. "This is how you get the job done and it really reflects that we're taking great, quality care of patients."

One of Reilly's patients, Villager Charles Dunn, agreed.

"It is quite amazing," the Village of Mallory Square resident said of the recognition and dedication of Villages Health providers. "I think that's the reason why the quality of care has developed like it has here. And I would dare say that many people have moved here just for that alone."

Another Villager, Don Hahnfeldt, said he is thrilled to live in a community where quality health care is so valued. In fact, Hahnfeldt, who serves as chairman of

the board of Central Florida Health Alliance, parent company of The Villages Regional Hospital, said he's thrilled to have The Villages Health as a partner in the continuum of care across the entire community.

"They have been recognized as the standard – the five-star performer in delivering patient excellence of care and number one in the state of Florida," the Village of Bridgeport at Lake Miona resident said. "We are very, very excited about this – a brand-new program that's

still a work in progress improving every single day."

For Dr. Joe Hildner, whose Family Doctors of Belleview practice merged with The Villages Health in 2012, the award and high national rankings prove that the journey to become America's Healthiest Hometown is well on its way to becoming a reality.

"It's no longer an idea that we're talking about happening one day," he said. "We are already demonstrably and measurably doing a better job than anybody else in Florida. That's kind of special."

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