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Quarterly Newsletter

MED ZED

FINDING & ENGAGING THE POWER OF EMPATHY



REDETERMINATION
BY: ENRIQUE BALANGER



FINDING AND ENGAGING
BY: NANCY VARGAS



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT
LINDSEY HALL



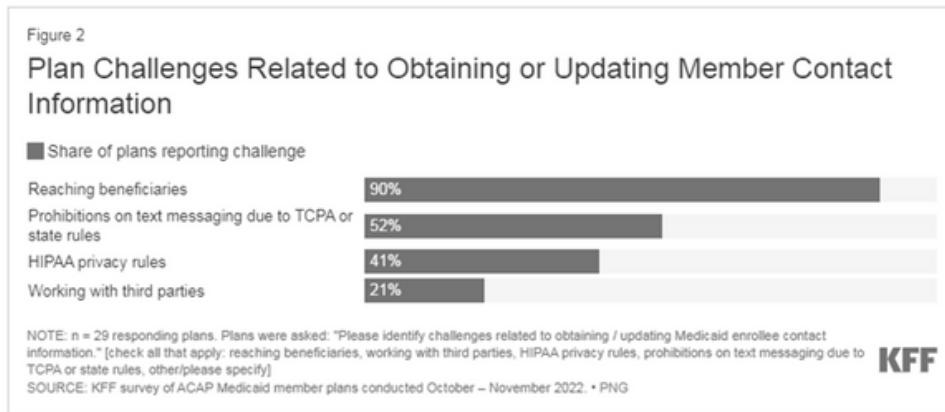


Redetermination: Our Quest to Keep Coverage

By: Enrique Balaguer, Chief Growth Officer

The end of the Public Health Emergency also marks the end of continuous Medicaid coverage for the nearly 92 million people who currently rely on this vital program. And according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), as many as 18 million enrollees may lose their Medicaid coverage and with it access to essential, often life-saving healthcare. While many will lose coverage because they no longer meet the income or categorical requirements for eligibility, up to 7 million individuals will lose coverage simply because they are unable to navigate the complex redetermination process—even though they remain fully eligible.


At MedZed redetermination assistance is an integral part of our patient and member care workflow. Our teams educate members about the importance of following all the required steps in the renewal process. They also provide hands-on help. This includes updating key information with state Medicaid agencies—name, address, phone number, job changes, pregnancy status, etc.—and helping to complete the renewal application, whether on paper or online.



The population MedZed serves falls largely into this second group: folks who are the most likely to remain eligible but also least able to jump through the myriad of bureaucratic hoops needed to keep their coverage. And this is not a one-time event. Going forward Medicaid enrollees will face the prospect of annual renewal. So what can be done for this population for whom continuity of coverage is so critical? State Medicaid and health plan education campaigns help but are not enough. The challenge lies in finding and engaging the members to keep them enrolled. Our partners collaborate with us because we have shown the ability to address their critical need to find members.


If a renewal application is denied, our teams work with the member to understand the reasons for the denial and to help file an appeal if appropriate. And in cases where a member no longer qualifies for Medicaid, our team assists the member obtain other coverage either through an ACA Exchange or commercial plan.

We believe that this hands-on approach is essential to the well-being of the members we serve and to MedZed's mission of advancing health equity.



Hands-on Help from MedZed

- Updating key information with Medicaid agencies
- Helping complete the application, paper and/or online
- Understanding denials and filing appeals
- Applying for alternative coverage if needed






Finding and Engaging: The Power of Empathy

By: Nancy Vargas, Director of Health Home - Washington Programs

MedZed's field staff, including Community Health Navigators (CHNs), face many challenges when it comes to finding and engaging members, but their passion for altruism and knowledge of the communities in which they reside is the backbone of our engagement model. Our CHNs invest themselves in locating their members because they realize at the heart of the most difficult-to-reach populations are the members who need our help the most. Our CHNs are experts at building rapport and understanding the social determinants of health, which helps them connect with these members and build trust with them.

Engagement is not only hard to obtain, but also challenging to maintain over time. Some obstacles include potential members not knowing who MedZed is, caregivers not allowing access to patients, incorrect addresses, abandoned homes, and gated communities. I've seen CHNs visit local gas stations and casually drive by day after day because they know that one day they will find the member, who is homeless and has not been engaged in the last few weeks. Our CHNs weigh difficult-to-navigate situations and are fearless in building connections with a member's family, who may not trust them on day one of outreach but come to see the CHN as an important part of their support team.

Like many of our CHNs, I've come from a low-income household, and have experienced firsthand the hardships of not having proper access to care or proper coordination of care. MedZed grants me the opportunity to give back daily by helping other CHNs coordinate access to care and resources for members of our community dealing with similar challenges.

CHNs invest time and effort in quality attempts and connections with members. They are able to build genuine relationships with the members they serve by sharing their experiences and understanding first-hand the issues that affect their lives and their health. CHNs like myself come directly from the heart of the community, which puts them at the front of the line regarding advocacy and solutions for our members. MedZed's engagement strategies are based on hiring passionate and empathetic staff, meeting each health plan's members where they are, and building meaningful connections that support them and promote independence on their journey to happiness and health. It is this unique approach to health care and engagement that sets MedZed's team apart and allows them to make a lasting difference in the lives of their members.



The happy faces of members and our staff who make a difference in their lives.

All members depicted have authorized MedZed to share their images.

Finding and Engaging: A Success Story

When Geneva received the referral for the member, she spent days searching the streets and calling his known phone numbers. Geneva is an experienced Housing Navigator with deep ties to the community, and by gut instinct, she decided to call her contact at one of the local shelters. Her contact escorted her to an outdoor location near the shelter, where many homeless individuals spent the daytime hours and violence was not uncommon. As she called the member's name, his head lifted, and she was elated that she had finally found the member. When she saw him, his heart was working at 20%; he was using meth to stay awake and alert to protect himself on the street, and he had fluid retention in both legs.



Geneva quickly secured a spot for him in a recuperative care center and got him medical and behavioral health services and follow-up appointments. She also found out that he is a veteran and was able to start the process for SSI all on the same day. As the member recovered, he went back on the street. But Geneva didn't give up; she knew now where he often hung out, and she returned to these places and found him again. She let him know she was going to keep checking on him and was still ready to help him. After several visits, she was able to place him in a recovery house, then into veteran housing. Today, he lives in a studio apartment there, and has found purpose in volunteering at a local pantry assisting veterans with food insecurity.

Her dedication, persistence, and relationships with members of the community enabled her to find the member and connect him with the services he needed to begin his recovery. And the bond of trust she developed with the member meant that when he was ready, he turned to Geneva for help. It is also important to note that Geneva's work did not stop once the member received medical care. She recognized the importance of addressing the member's social determinants of health, such as his housing and employment status, and worked to connect him with resources that could help him achieve stability and purpose. Geneva's work is a shining example of the important role that CHNs play in providing care to underserved and vulnerable populations.



Employee Spotlight: Lindsey Hall

- Lindsey Hall, VP, Social & Episodic Programs, East
- Started with MedZed as a Community Health Navigator in 2014
- Promoted to Asst. Program Manager in 2016,
- Program Manager in 2017,
- Regional Manager in 2020, Leadership Team in 2021

My background is in psychology, and I enjoy interacting with others, helping underserved communities, and helping them achieve something they may be working on. I'm what they call a 'Do-gooder.' When I was promoted to Manager, the team was still small, but I saw how I could help my colleagues improve by being more effective with the members. As a CHN, what I loved was the detective work. Every opportunity that came up, with friends or family members, colleagues, asking the probing questions, "Do you know them? Do you know how I can reach them?" or aligning with neighbors to help make that initial contact. Once you find the member, you shift your thinking to "How do I enroll? How do I get this person on board?"

As a manager and now part of the Leadership Team, I encourage the team to be curious about finding the member, asking probing questions, and connect with the member to get better engagement out of them in the long run. How we do outreach in Maryland differs from how we do outreach in New Jersey. Where you are living impacts your struggles and your personality. Being part of the Leadership Team allows me to see our other programs and the significant aspects the team members bring to different communities. Being in this role, I get exposure to all that and I can share the perspectives of the different field teams with other firm leaders. I think that's really important, and I enjoy that.