Foundation for Social Connection

CASE STUDY

State Medicaid Strategies

Developing a Social Connectedness Blueprint for State Medicaid Plans

PARTNER United Healthcare

ADVISORY SERVICE DISCOVERY & SENSEMAKING

The Opportunity

UnitedHealthcare wanted to better identify and support Medicaid and dual-eligible members experiencing social isolation and loneliness. Across the enterprise, markets were screening for social needs, analytics teams were building predictive models, and plans were piloting vendor solutions. The opportunity was to bring these efforts together into a clear view of what was working and how to apply it across Medicaid markets.

Our Approach

F4SC led an enterprise-wide **discovery and sensemaking process**, beginning with a **landscape assessment** built on 11 stakeholder interviews across medical economics, Optum analytics, social responsibility, community investment, and plan leadership. The interviews documented where social isolation and loneliness were already addressed in UnitedHealthcare's screening tools, risk models, products, and vendor partnerships. We paired those conversations with existing screening data to identify gaps in how members are screened, prioritized, and connected to support. F4SC **translated these findings into recommendations** for implementing social connection strategies in Medicaid.

The Impact

The partnership provided UnitedHealthcare with a consolidated picture of how teams across the enterprise were addressing social isolation and loneliness, and connected leaders whose work had been running in parallel. The discovery process also broadened who the organization considered at risk: screening data from Western Colorado showed loneliness was most prevalent among young adults and working-age adults, not only older adults. With these insights, UnitedHealthcare has stronger evidence to guide how it screens and prioritizes members, evaluates potential vendor partners, and makes the case for investing in social connection within Medicaid.

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