

How Carelon Palliative Care delivered 4:1 ROI while enhancing quality of life



Discover how Carelon Palliative Care helped a nonprofit health system rein in high hospital and emergency room use among members with serious illnesses — delivering more support, more compassion, and an impressive 4:1 ROI.

Being diagnosed with a serious illness can evoke a flood of emotions. Patients and their loved ones may feel afraid, angry, confused, overwhelmed, or sad. At the same time, they also need to learn about the condition and start treatment. And they may worry about how to pay for it all. It's a lot to handle.

Palliative care offers an extra layer of support. This case study shows how personalized palliative care services guided patients and their loved ones through serious healthcare challenges while also helping them and the health plan lower care costs.

The challenge

Patients with serious illnesses often go to the emergency department (ED) for care and symptom relief, leading to increased hospital admissions. Our health plan client recognized that these ED visits not only raised their healthcare costs but also burdened members and their families with higher medical expenses, unnecessary admissions, and fragmented care. The client sought a solution to reduce avoidable healthcare costs without compromising patient outcomes and quality of care.

The solution

Carelon Palliative Care offered the solution they needed. Palliative care focuses on enhancing the quality of life for patients and their loved ones. It does this in part by helping to relieve physical symptoms, improving care coordination, and addressing the member's unique medical, emotional, and social needs. The services are not end of life and don't always lead to hospice.

More savings¹

4:1 ROI

\$2,203
per member
per month savings

87 NPS
indicates trust in and
a strong willingness to
recommend our services

More patient satisfaction¹

84%

said care providers listened to their needs

82%

felt satisfied with the program

82%

reported that their care provider was helpful

74%

felt pleased with their care provider's communication

72%

said their care provider helped manage symptoms

In this instance, Carelon's interdisciplinary palliative care team developed a personalized, comprehensive care strategy for each of the health plan's 412 patients who needed extra support and attention between doctor's appointments.

During 7,230 visits with these patients and their families over a year, the team attended to each person's unique needs, ensured continuity and coordination of care with their providers, and improved overall well-being. The team included a range of specialized providers, each playing a vital role:

- **Advanced practice provider (APP) and physician:** Focused on advance care planning, symptom management, and regular medical assessments to tailor treatment plans.
- **Case manager RN:** Coordinated various aspects of patient care, facilitated smooth communication among all parties involved, and acted as the primary contact for patients.
- **Social worker:** Provided psychosocial support, addressing family dynamics and assisting with community resources to alleviate nonmedical barriers to care.
- **Triage RN:** Offered immediate clinical advice and quickly prioritized patients' healthcare needs, reducing unnecessary ED visits.

The results

The compassion and attention of the interdisciplinary palliative care team made a significant difference in the lives of these patients and their loved ones. The team made in-person and virtual care visits a priority, averaging 17 visits per patient over the year, successfully reducing hospital and ED utilization.

For this health plan partner, that high-touch, coordinated approach translated into measurable outcomes that demonstrate both clinical and financial impact:

- **Cost savings and improved patient satisfaction, including:**
 - A **4:1 ROI**, saving the health plan **\$2,203 per member per month**.¹ The typical ROI for Commercial and National Medicaid plans is 3:1.²
 - A **NPS of 87**,¹ well above the "world-class" healthcare benchmark of 70.³
- **34% fewer hospital admissions** through proactive management and regular follow-ups.¹
- **29% fewer noncritical ED visits** due to enhanced access to care and immediate responses to health concerns by the triage RN.¹

Carelon Palliative Care demonstrates how compassionate, coordinated support can transform care for patients with serious illness while easing the burden on health plans. The model is scalable and adaptable, with tailored strategies for Medicare Advantage, Medicaid, and Commercial populations — ensuring every plan can meet the needs of its most vulnerable members. By partnering with Carelon, health plans can take a meaningful step toward more humane, cost-effective, and patient-centered care.

Ready to reduce costs and improve care?



Discover how your plan could see similar savings.
Scan the QR code to schedule a consultation.



Meet our care team
Scan the QR code to watch the video.

¹ Internal Carelon Health Data Science Team, Reported 2024 (Measurement period Jan 2023–Nov 2024)

² ROI for Commercial (excluding ASO) and National Medicaid health plans. Internal Carelon Health Data Science Team, Reported 2024 (Measurement period Jan 2022–Dec 2022)

³ Lobbie Institute: *What is a good NPS score for healthcare organizations?* (June 30, 2023); lobbie.com.