



# Advanced Primary Care

The front line of a  
health revolution

EBOOK



# Advanced Primary Care

For many of us, navigating today's healthcare landscape is fraught with complexity and insecurity. As we contend with our insurance plans, budgets, and the lack of access to primary care, many of us are less inclined to take action on our health, even when we really need to.



**For employers**, healthcare benefits are expensive, costs are always rising, and it's hard to assess effectiveness. What makes a plan with Network A better than one with Network B?



**For insurance plan providers** — also called payers — challenges include growing scrutiny, dissatisfied members, and threats from competitors. How can they set themselves apart and create value for all involved?

In this eBook, we'll discuss advanced primary care (APC), its benefits, how it differs from the traditional healthcare model, and how it can be implemented as part of a robust benefits strategy. Most importantly, we'll illustrate how it solves problems for patients, employers, and payers alike.



## SECTION ONE

# What is **advanced primary care**?

## **The need for APC in the current healthcare environment**

Simply put, it's what healthcare should be. Advanced primary care is a healthcare model for building stronger relationships, increasing engagement, lowering costs, and improving outcomes. It takes what people have come to expect from standard fee for service healthcare — the long waits, the frustratingly short appointments, the shuffle of specialist visits, the high costs and stress — and turns it upside down, creating a new model with aligned incentives that benefit patients, providers, communities, employers, and insurers while saving money.

In the current system — which relies on transactional, incident-based interactions between patients and physicians — most people see a doctor only when they're feeling sick, and only when the situation seems dire enough to warrant the cost of a visit.



## SECTION ONE

### What is **advanced primary care**?

According to a recent CNBC article, over half of Americans put off medical treatment because of cost concerns. Even those with health insurance may delay getting help until they feel so poorly that they bypass their primary care clinic altogether and go straight to the emergency room.

In this type of system, costs can quickly spiral out of control. For patients paying out of pocket, underutilizing primary care in favor of urgent care can mean the difference between a simple \$150 visit vs. a trip costing thousands of dollars to treat an issue that might easily have been diagnosed and addressed beforehand.

Not to mention that patients rarely receive satisfactory appointments when they do make them — ones composed of long waits and impersonal treatment, infrequent visits to their primary physician and various specialists, and anxiety about the price tag attached.



**Advanced primary care provides a more proactive and comprehensive approach,** minimizing obstacles to health by emphasizing time-rich appointments, empathetic listening, and behavior change. The results are better outcomes, improved population health and satisfaction, and fewer claims.

## SECTION ONE

### What is **advanced primary care**?

**Delivering advanced primary care starts with understanding what's important to people's health and working backwards to build a model around it.**

- **Accessibility** to more providers, smart scheduling, low to no-cost visits, convenient locations, and no wait times
- **Primary care providers who have the time, support and staff** to provide most of a person's care — care that in today's system is being outsourced to specialists
- **Empathetic listening** that goes beyond prescriptive medicine, building connections and understanding of a person's whole health
- **Time-rich appointments** that allow people to be heard and providers to understand them beyond their symptoms
- **An informatics platform** that identifies health risk opportunities and provides actionable insight into utilization
- **Care coordination** to prevent gaps in communication and treatment when specialty care is appropriate, including follow-up, and integration into the member's care plan
- **Professional health coaches** who use the transtheoretical behavior change model to help patients improve their lifestyles and achieve life goals
- **Culture change** is the result of people seeing their care team as an extension of their friends and family, and the powerful realization that they, themselves, are in control of their own health



## SECTION TWO

# APC: **A better healthcare model**

Under the current system, primary care physicians in traditional clinics are hard-pressed to meet their patients' needs for greater time, access, and services. Because of this, they've had to sacrifice several key touchstones — namely, time-rich appointments, strong relationships, and consistent involvement in the patient's health journey — as a matter of necessity. This fee-for-service model demands, among other things, seeing as many patients as possible, which seriously diminishes the time and attention they can spend with patients, getting to know them beyond the symptoms they show up with.

## SECTION TWO

# APC: A better healthcare model

**Advanced primary care, in contrast, flips the current standard of healthcare upside down, starting with what's most important to patient health: time and understanding.**

The model is built to allow providers the time they need to form trust with their patients, so they can work on understanding not just their physical health needs, but the social, financial, and social determinants that underlie who they are. **Within the advanced primary care model, the care team has everything they need to serve their patients and communities the way they were trained to.** It also delivers aligned incentives, like optimized utilization and quality of care over quantity of patients, that drive down costs through better health.

Making primary care the first and often only stop for healthcare needs, questions, and concerns gives members a greater sense of security that helps ease them away from an encounter-based approach toward richer value-driven interactions that deliver the right care to the right person at the right time.



By bringing together several disparate pieces of the healthcare system, thereby making them more accessible and understandable, **APC empowers members to create and meet lifelong health goals, and physicians to act as partners and invaluable resources in the care of those they serve.**



### SECTION THREE

# Who does advanced primary care **benefit?**

APC offers many advantages over both the traditional care model and the prevalent “urgent care as healthcare” mindset.



### SECTION THREE

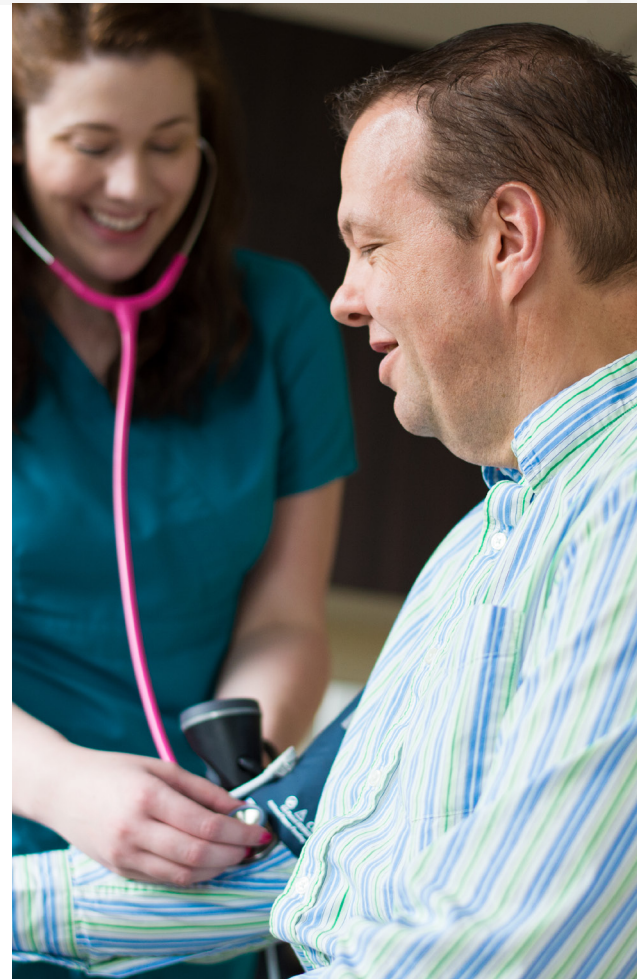
## Who does advanced primary care **benefit**?

### Members

An unfortunate effect of the current process is a member base that often feels detached from a long-term view of their overall health. Members are often under the impression that their concerns are unseen and unheard beyond a cursory level, lost in the large number of cases to be seen on any given day.

APC reframes primary care, making it the heart of health management rather than a gatekeeper for specialist diagnosis and treatment. Members are able to see a provider quickly, receive thorough and thoughtful care from someone who knows them, and get follow-up support after seeing other experts and providers.

Experiencing their treatment as part of an interconnected support system, rather than a series of boxes to check, helps the member build the foundation for behavior change and ongoing engagement with the healthcare process.



### SECTION THREE

## Who does advanced primary care **benefit**?



### Care providers

Advanced primary care enables physicians, health coaches, nurses, MAs, and other members of a medical team to build stronger relationships with patients and provide most of the healthcare services that patients will ever need.

With enough time to investigate the root causes of health issues, providers are able to create a smoother, more comprehensive experience for patients — one that feels less disjointed by visits to outside specialists or facilities with little or no communication back to the primary care team.

Increasing patient trust and engagement in this fashion allows for an in-depth understanding of patients and populations that can affect which approach to choose in tackling both immediate medical issues and long-term goals.

### SECTION THREE

## Who does advanced primary care **benefit**?

### Communities

The use of population and claims data to enhance healthcare efforts for target patients has an impact even outside the walls of a care center. Incorporating better metrics and health information technology provides insight into community risk factors and ways to further minimize them.

When fully implemented, **advanced primary care helps create better-informed patients, more involved doctors, and up-to-date tracking of community health.** Along with the wealth of data that APC can help to provide, it can also aid in the prevention of medical issues throughout a localized area or vulnerable patient set — saving both resources and money that can be used to build better clinical infrastructures.



### SECTION THREE

## Who does advanced primary care **benefit**?

### Employers

Advanced primary care also offers distinct advantages for employers and HR administrators who are looking for lower-stress company healthcare options that can best serve the needs of their employees and budgets.

#### ***Improved Employee Health***

Healthier employees are more satisfied, focused, and productive. When team members enjoy streamlined processes to meet with their primary care providers, they're more likely to take further responsibility for their own health. Knowing they can consult easily with a medical professional and get the help they need will encourage employees to make fuller use of care center services, even when they aren't sick.

#### ***Promoting a Culture of Health***

Providing an APC option for team members demonstrates an investment in their continued health. Whether the goal is to manage blood pressure, recover from an injury, or mitigate risk factors like smoking and insomnia, trained health coaches and medical staff add even greater value to the workplace, giving employees resources for understanding and advocating for their health in practical, actionable ways.

#### ***Lower Healthcare Costs***

With healthy employees and regular preventive care, companies are less likely to lose money in staff coverage and time off for sick workers, not to mention fewer claims. Shorter wait times and maximized reverse referrals also contribute to lower costs overall. Organizations that participate in our open APC care centers generally see significant savings and ROI within the first year.

### SECTION THREE

## Who does advanced primary care **benefit**?

### Payers

Advanced primary care makes payers relevant in a rapidly evolving industry, allowing them to control their destiny by raising value, member satisfaction, and market share. Rather than simply paying for care or negotiating on price, providing APC to employer groups and individuals demonstrates a commitment to adding value and keeping pace with the demand for an alternative to the standard narrow network approach. **Insurers gain greater control over member satisfaction by delivering healthcare itself rather than healthcare products.** APC also allows for better cost control, since care is being delivered at the primary care level (which means fewer and less costly specialist claims), benefitting all member types, including:

- Individual consumers
- Group employer consumers
- Medicare Advantage consumers

In short, APC sets payers apart in the marketplace, adding value to payer clients and members, improving member satisfaction, and driving down the total cost of healthcare.







#### SECTION FOUR

# Vera: Changing the face of **primary care**

Vera Whole Health has been at the vanguard of advanced primary care education and public health management since 2012. We have the resources, knowledge, and experience to help patients, employers, and insurers understand and implement APC. Here are a few of the ways we make the process easy and effective.

## SECTION FOUR

### Vera: Changing the face of **primary care**



#### Advanced Primary Care Delivery

APC treats people, not just symptoms. By implementing Vera's model for advanced primary care, we're able to identify risk factors through claims data, engage with patients about their health proactively, and intervene on their behalf through personalized care plans and coordination with other providers and specialists. The primary care team stays informed and involved at every stage, even when specialist care is necessary.



#### The Importance of Care Centers

Advanced primary care encompasses a whole network of services. Care centers are a vehicle for delivering those services, centralizing healthcare for patients. They receive the majority of consultation, treatment, and follow-up they need at one convenient location from one dedicated primary care team.



#### Whole Health Councils

To help build a culture of health and infuse it throughout the community, Whole Health Councils — made up of select people from all parts of an organization — collect feedback and make suggestions so that accessing advanced primary care is easier and more beneficial for members. Companies then have an active hand in shaping the way APC is delivered to best suit their employees' needs.

## SECTION FOUR

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### Core Services for Most Healthcare Needs

**Planned Care** — Providing annual whole health evaluations, comprehensive physical exams, biometric screenings, health risk assessments, injections and immunizations, travel medicine, and provider-dispensed medications. Onsite labs and coordination of specialty care also increase the convenience of patient visits.

**Unplanned Care** — Treating illness and serious injuries quickly, with episodic sick and urgent care. The primary team will provide care for suturing and basic wounds, sprains, infections, colds and upper respiratory issues, urinary tract issues, and asthma.

**Health Coaching** — Facilitating lasting lifestyle and behavior change that improves health. Vera's health coaches are an integral part of the primary care team, trained in empathetic listening and the transtheoretical behavior change model. They provide the guidance and support patients need to own and manage their own health.

**Disease Management** — Managing the chronic medical conditions of high-risk, high-cost patients through education. The primary care team helps affected patients understand their disease, its causes, exacerbating factors, ways to avoid worsening the condition, and how to manage their health for improved quality of life.

**Occupational Health** — Protecting your workplace and employees with medical services that treat work-related injuries and provide care coordination, employment assessments, drug and CDL testing, and workplace safety.

#### SECTION FOUR

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#### Health coaching

Vera Whole Health Coaches are embedded members of the care team who guide patients through each stage of change in taking control of their own health. They're trained in empathetic listening and the transtheoretical model of change. Vera Whole Health coaches give patients the support they need to make healthy, sustainable changes to their lifestyles so they can meet their goals.

All of our staff are trained by our Learning & Development department, to ensure the highest standards of care and professionalism are upheld when engaging with patients across a wide range of backgrounds, lifestyles, and healthcare needs.

#### SECTION FOUR

## Vera: Changing the face of **primary care**

### Accessibility anywhere

Vera Whole Health can [help members find their nearest or preferred care center](#) and make an appointment. Whether to extend their current healthcare team or establish care with one of our physicians, we make it simple to schedule a visit, explore services, and view medical records, charts, and other information. Our mobile app makes it even easier to manage healthcare while on the road or away from a computer.





#### SECTION FOUR

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## Total Healthcare Cost Savings

With Vera, employers have seen up to a 21% reduction in total healthcare costs during the first year alone. Here are a few more figures to consider:



**17-21%**

reduction in total  
healthcare costs



**31%**

reduction in primary  
care claims



**1:44:1**

ROI in year 1  
(1.60:1 in year 3)



**67-82%**

employee engagement

#### SECTION FOUR

### Vera: Changing the face of **primary care**



**For patients**, advanced primary care delivers on the promise of what healthcare should be, but has never been. By emphasizing quality of care, risk identification, and behavior change, it creates more informed and proactive people who are more equipped to take action and be advocates for their health.



**For employers**, APC provides an ideal method for improving employee health while driving down costs throughout an organization. With benefits that include better population health and outcomes, along with higher satisfaction rates, it's also a great tool for retention and recruitment.



**For insurers** who want to stand out in a field of similar carriers, networks, and other competitors, advanced primary care provides value-added benefits that current and prospective members will appreciate. Delivering APC healthcare, not just healthcare products, provides better control over member satisfaction and costs. Partnering with the right APC provider allows for even further satisfaction and savings.

**To learn more about Vera Whole Health and our advanced primary care methodology – [contact us for a consultation](#).**