



Getting Care Quick

How to educate employees about where to go for care

Misuse of the emergency room (ER) is a hot topic in the health care industry today. As employers continue to look for ways to control rising costs, many are starting to focus their efforts on where their employees receive care.

“Studies show that a large percentage of ER visits can be treated in a more appropriate care setting, such as an urgent care, doctor’s office, retail health clinic or a telehealth program,” says Susan Lehne, Sales Manager, HealthLink. “This can represent a lot of wasted spending for employers and their employees.”

While some employees are starting to understand that where they receive care affects their cost, others still need education on this topic.

“Remember advanced planning goes a long way, so education can have a big impact on helping employees decide where to get care when they need it.”

Employee education doesn’t have to take a lot of time and effort and there may already be tools and resources available to help. Here are five tips to help you easily educate your employees about where to go for care.

1. Ask your insurance carrier, network partner, TPA or broker

They should be able to give you materials that you can use to educate your employees about the importance of getting care in the appropriate setting. Using these materials, you can start an educational campaign without a lot of time or effort.

2. Promote your health plan’s programs

If you offer a nurse line or telehealth program, your employees should be educated about it. Telehealth programs are fast, inexpensive and very effective for non-emergency care – day or night – and a nurse line is the perfect solution for addressing health concerns and helping employees decide where to go for care.

3. Promote your health plan’s Find a Doctor tool

A Find a Doctor tool is a valuable resource. It can help employees determine which doctors and facilities are in-network and help them locate their nearest urgent care or retail health clinic. Employees who are aware of their

options are more likely to make an educated decision when they need care right away.

4. Remind employees that some situations do require the ER

Employees should call 911 or go to the ER if they think they could put their health at serious risk by delaying care. Your insurance carrier, network partner or TPA may be able to provide you with materials to clearly explain to employees when to seek emergency care and when to consider other options.

5. Provide a reference chart

Ask your insurance carrier, network partner or TPA for an easy-to-read chart that shows which care options work best based on employees’ medical needs, time, availability and cost.

When employees are prepared, and know how to answer the questions “what now?” and “where to?” before the need arises, they are more likely to make smart purchasing decisions. This helps the employee save on their out-of-pocket costs and saves money for the health plan. A win-win for employers.