



DECEMBER 2015 | VOLUME 1

MEMBER STORY



## Solving the problem of pain.

A member suffering from chronic pain finds health and healing by adding acupuncture to his plan of care.

For Ben,\* just getting through the day was painful. At only 40 years old, he had struggled with stomach pain for over 15 years and had a long list of medical diagnoses, including a gastric ulcer, eczema, insomnia, depression, anxiety and chronic pain.

Ben had tried to manage his many health issues. He saw his providers regularly, including a PCP, nutritionist and GI specialist. He'd had surgery for hemorrhoids and bunions. He was seeing a therapist weekly and a psychiatrist every other month. He took several medications and supplements, including Ambien, lorazepam, Nexium, Metamucil, Remeron and Colace. Yet he ended up in the emergency room frequently, seeking relief from stomach, back and foot pain.

Those frequent ER visits were a red flag for Ben's Community Plan case manager, indicating that he was not getting the pain relief he needed. They also made him eligible for the Advanced Medicine

Integration of Rhode Island (AMI) program, a service that UnitedHealthcare contracts with to provide holistic nurse care management and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) services to members suffering from chronic pain.

When Ben enrolled in 2013, he started receiving case management services from Kimberly Owens, a nurse with AMI. At that point, Ben was depressed and discouraged. "He was dealing with a lot of stomach issues, insomnia and pain," Owens recalled. "He felt so frustrated and powerless."

At Ben's initial assessment, Owens asked him to rate his pain on a 1 to 10 scale, with 10 being the highest. He reported 7 for physical pain, 6 for fatigue and 5 for depression.

To treat his pain, Ben could choose from massage, chiropractic and acupuncture services, to be provided twice a month. Ben chose

### COST SAVINGS

Ben's total monthly utilization costs have been reduced by 89% over the two years he has participated in AMI<sup>2</sup>

Hospital	
Year 1	Year 2
\$261.75	\$0

Doctors	
Year 1	Year 2
\$488	\$98.75

Prescription Drugs	
Year 1	Year 2
\$203.83	\$0

TOTAL MONTHLY COST	
Year 1	Year 2
\$953.58	\$98.75

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**"He says he feels so good, he couldn't even have dreamt of feeling like this before." Kimberly Owens**

MEMBER STORY

## Solving the problem of pain.

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acupuncture, and Owens arranged for an in-home acupuncturist.

From the beginning, Ben was extremely motivated. In addition to keeping all his acupuncture appointments, he continued to see his medical and mental health providers and worked hard to improve his diet. "There are some members who need a lot of support and reminder calls, but he wasn't one of them," said Owens.

Before long, Ben's health began to improve. "If you can get patients to engage regularly in the first six months, they really start to reap the benefits," said Owens. She continually monitored Ben's progress, adding extra acupuncture treatments as needed. "At first he was getting up to four visits a month. Then we went to three, which he said helped him feel better almost of all the time," she said.

In addition to acupuncture, Owens said that just being heard is helpful for members like Ben and other AMI participants. "We are really patient-focused and the therapeutic listening we do helps build trust and strengthen the relationship," she said. "That allows us to get buy-in from patients, which

helps them be more open about what they can do to help themselves feel better."

For Ben, it all added up to major health improvements. In his most recent assessment in July 2015, Ben reported that he no longer has depression, anxiety or stomach issues. He's sleeping better because his pain isn't waking him up. He's lost 29 pounds, is off of all of his medications, and hasn't had an emergency room visit in over two years. And his pain numbers? "He now reports 0 for pain, 0 for fatigue and 1 for depression," said Owens.

Going forward, Owens is optimistic about Ben's continued health and well-being. There's no limit on how long a member can remain on AMI, so Ben is still receiving twice-a-month acupuncture treatments, which are helping him maintain his improved health. He still has some foot pain and eczema, but his quality of life has improved dramatically, allowing him to be a better dad to his children and enjoy everyday activities, like gardening.

"He says he feels so good, he couldn't even have dreamt of feeling like this

before," said Owens. "Acupuncture works—it really does. He is just ecstatic to be off his drugs and enjoying life. And I'm excited that he's been able to regain his health in such a cost-effective way."



**BETTER HEALTH**  
Member no longer experiences depression, anxiety or stomach pain.

**BETTER VALUE**  
Member's utilization costs reduced by 89%<sup>2</sup>

**BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE**  
Member now enjoys greater happiness and well-being.

\*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of our members.  
<sup>1</sup>UnitedHealthcare Internal data.  
<sup>2</sup>Fieglar, E. W., T. A. Lieu, P. H. Wise, and S. Murthy. Hagataf. "Families' health-related social problems and missed referral opportunities." *Pediatrics*, 119(8) (2007): e1332-41. doi:10.1542/peds.2009-1605. Accessed at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17545363.  
<sup>3</sup>"Health Care's Blind Side: The Overlooked Connection Between Social Needs and Good Health." Rep. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Dec. 2011. Web. 10 Jan. 2012. Accessed at www.rwjf.org/files/resource/RWJFPhysiciansSurveyExecutiveSummary.pdf.  
<sup>4</sup>Van Gorp et al. "Screening for Basic Social Needs at a Medical Home for Low-Income Children." *Clinical Pediatrics*, Jan. 2009 48(1):32-35. Accessed at www.zinniaonline.org/Publications/in-the-Literature/2009/M3/Screening-for-Basic-Social-Needs-at-a-Medical-Home-for-Low-Income-Children.aspx.  
<sup>5</sup>National Retail Federation, www.nrf.com/news/infographic-top-10-trends-back-school-end-college-2015.  
<sup>6</sup>2015 Teacher Spending Survey, Agilia Marketing Share ID, www.agilia-ed.com/resources/2015-teacher-spending-survey.

<p>Client Aits</p> <p><b>1</b></p> <p>PERISCOPE®</p>	<p>Internal &amp; External Team</p> <p>Date: 12/10/15</p> <p>Creative Prod. Mgr:</p> <p>Job Number: UCS140149</p>	<p>Project Details</p> <p>Dept #: NA</p> <p>Name: State Stories_Rhode Island_DEC15</p> <p>Stage: IR Reading Level: X</p> <p>File Name: UCS140149_StateStories_RI_DEC15</p>	<p>Color</p> <p>CMYK</p> <p></p>	<p>Dimensions</p> <p>Flat: 17" x 11"</p> <p>Folded: 8.5" x 11"</p> <p>Software: InDesign CS6</p> <p>Notes</p>
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