

Substance use disorders

Connecting members to evidence-based care

Nearly 50 million Americans experienced a substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year – and millions more misuse alcohol, prescription medications or illicit drugs each year, putting them at risk for addiction.[1] In the United States, excessive alcohol use is a leading cause of preventable death[2] – and opioid overdose deaths have reached an all-time high.[3]

Furthermore, substance use is rising. Among the 134.7 million people age 12 or older who used alcohol in 2023, 45.6% had engaged in binge drinking in the past month.[4]

Despite the widespread need, only a tiny fraction (9.1%) of those with co-occurring mental health issues and SUDs receive treatment for both conditions.[4] Of surveyed adolescents ages 12 to 17, 31.9% received mental health treatment in the past year, an increase of more than 500,000 from 2022.[4] Many are fearful to pursue care, due to potential stigmatization from family, friends, colleagues or even themselves.

Others are unable to find or access treatment that meets their needs. And those who seek help are sometimes lured into costly out-of-network facilities that emphasize amenities rather than quality of care, and offer no proven clinical advantages.

Optum® Behavioral Health offers evidence-based resources and support to meet the unique needs of members and their families. With access to the right level of care and support, individuals can achieve stabilization, build resiliency and sustain recovery.

Nearly
50M
Americans age 12 and over have a substance use disorder.[1]

Over
70%
of individuals with alcohol abuse or dependence never receive treatment.[1]

In 2023,
3.1%
of Americans (8.9 million) misused opioids.[4]

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Support for long-term recovery

Getting evidence-based treatment from in-network providers improves the likelihood that patients will have the support systems, community resources and regular touch points that are vital to sustaining recovery.

Our approach combines a compassionate team of care advocates and peer support specialists, innovative analytics, and programs that build relationships with members, providers and their communities. By identifying those at risk and improving access, Optum helps connect members to the level of care they need, while contributing to better overall outcomes and a lower total cost of care.

We provide an evidence-based SUD strategy across the continuum of care that:

Identifies – We apply analytics for early intervention. This includes providing screening and intervention tools to clinicians, plus self-assessment tools.

Engages – We connect members to evidence-based care, treatment referrals, educational tools and support resources.

Guides – We promote recovery with ongoing support, including digital tools and recovery plans, and peer-led support when indicated, to help build resiliency and address barriers and social determinants of health.

The right care at the right time

Optum Behavioral Health brings clinical expertise to connect members to personalized, evidence-based treatment for SUD and co-occurring mental health issues. Expert advocates guide members and families to the most appropriate care for their situation at a pace that works for them.

Substance Use Disorder Helpline – Members and their families can get immediate, locally based provider referrals and other confidential assistance 24/7 by phone at no additional cost.

Facility Benefit Inquiry Program – Members are better able to sustain long-term recovery with an established support system close to home. Optum care advocates guide individuals to local, in-network, evidence-based options for SUD care.

Medications for Opioid and Alcohol Use Disorders – This effective, evidence-based treatment utilizes FDA-approved medications in conjunction with therapy and other recovery support. The use of medication can lower the risk of overdose, relieve cravings and promote recovery. Members are connected to local high-quality services nearby. Optum bundles member rates and streamlines invoicing to make it easier for members to engage in and access care with lower out-of-pocket costs.

Addiction, Treatment Locator, Assessment and Standards Platform (ATLAS) – This simple, confidential online assessment helps determine the right level of care at a particular moment. It connects an individual to a treatment program with the necessary evidence-based treatment components for their particular issue. The ATLAS tool is provided by Shatterproof, a leading organization in helping individuals understand addiction, break down stigma and get the support they need. This assessment was developed in partnership with the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

Care across a range of needs – From members looking to find new ways to cope with anxiety and stress to those seeking treatment for an SUD, we offer a full suite of solutions ranging from evidence-based self-help tools and virtual coaching to in-network providers delivering inpatient and outpatient care.

90% of individuals who identify themselves when calling the Substance Use Disorder Helpline use in-network treatment, leading to better outcomes and a lowered total cost of care.[5]

SUD Helpline handled **10K+** calls in 2022 with just under a 12-minute average call time with members.[6]

Readmission rates for people treated at out-of-state, out-of-network residential treatment centers are **112%–170%** higher.[7] Treatments with out-of-state, out-of-network programs are **104%** higher in cost for 90-day episodes of care.[7]

96% of our members are within 20 miles of an in-network facility with a provider of medications for opioid and substance use disorders.[8]

Utilizing our Platinum facilities for high-acuity care results in an average savings of **$2,991** per inpatient episode.[8]

Learn more

For more information, visit optum.com/behavioralhealth or contact your Optum representative.

1. Addiction Group. 2024 addiction statistics: Accurate data on substance use in the US. June 12, 2024.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Facts about U.S. deaths from excessive alcohol use. Aug. 6, 2024.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Provisional drug overdose death counts. Aug. 14, 2024.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. SAMHSA releases annual National Survey on Drug Use and Health. July 30, 2024.
5. Substance Use Treatment Helpline performance monitoring and related claims from January 1, 2017, to September 30, 2018. Nussbaum. January 2019.
6. MISskillreporting, 2022. Nussbaum. March 13, 2023.
7. Optum comparative analysis of average annual 30- and 90-day readmission rates for in-network and out-of-network residential SUD treatment programs authorized for members (2021 discharges). Bolstrom, Behavioral Value and Benefits Management. March 2022.
8. Behavioral Health Source of Truth (March 2022 data). Karimzadeh. April 2022.

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