

CASE STUDY

Strive Health Reduces Hospital Admissions and ER Visits for Kidney Patients



Summary

In 2021, Strive Health partnered with a Southeastern regional health plan to tackle the enormous health and economic impact of kidney disease on communities across the region. The value-based care partnership has benefited thousands of Medicare Advantage, commercial and federal employee patients through comprehensive and coordinated high-value kidney care. As the partnership heads into its third year, the results are material: Strive's model has helped reduce hospital admissions by 49% and lower the total cost of care by 31% for high-risk and complex patients with kidney disease.

A Health Equity Challenge

The Challenge

Kidney disease is the fastest-growing noncommunicable disease in the United States. Medicare costs alone total over \$130 billion per year, or almost one-quarter of Medicare spend, on the disease annually. Unfortunately, it often goes undiagnosed. As a result, 90% of people with kidney disease don't know they have it. Symptoms usually don't appear until patients are in advanced stages, which results in unnecessarily high costs for payors and suboptimal outcomes for patients.

The Southeast region of the U.S., also known as the Stroke Belt, ranks among the highest in high-risk end-stage kidney disease (ESKD). Conversely, southern states have low rates of kidney transplants, healthcare access indicators and outcomes. Comorbidities are common in the region, including obesity, hypertension and diabetes. So are high hospitalization rates for chronic conditions and high premature mortality rates.

Many chronic kidney disease (CKD) diagnoses are attributed to diabetes, high blood pressure and other risk factors. In addition, geography and social determinants of health such as income levels and access to healthcare, affordable housing and transportation put vulnerable and rural populations at high risk.

Consider the following:

- Kidney disease is the fastest-growing noncommunicable disease in the U.S.³
- Black people are almost four times as likely to be diagnosed with renal failure as white people.⁴
- 35% of people with kidney failure are Black (while making up 13% of the population).⁵
- About 14% of Hispanic adults have CKD.⁶
- Since 2000, there has been a 70% increase in Hispanic people with kidney failure.
- 80% of Strive patients live in a geographic area below the Average Per Capita Household Income Level.
- Pre-dialysis nephrology care can lead to lower death and hospitalization rates.⁷

The health plan's leadership team recognized that the traditional reactive model of kidney care wasn't serving the local patient population. Not only was it costly for the health plan and its members, but it also wasn't treating patients as individuals.



The Solution — Specialized Whole-Person Care

With Strive, the health plan found an ally that shared its mission of improving patient care via earlier intervention and whole-person care. Strive also brought critical capabilities that include a nurse practitioner-led care team, purpose-built machine learning technology that helps Strive clinicians prioritize intervention, and a leadership and clinical care team passionate about combating this disease.

Strive worked with the health plan to understand its region's patient population and unique challenges. From there, the two partners mapped out the local market dynamics to bring Strive's specialized value-based care model to the local population in need.

The result was a customized solution to slow disease progression, reduce the total cost of care and improve the quality of care for patients with stage four, five and ESRD. In addition, the solution enhances the quality of life for patients with high-risk CKD and multiple comorbidities, and improves access to supplemental patient care and support.

Strive's care model can slow kidney disease progression by identifying at-risk patients early. It is empowered by groundbreaking technology and delivers personalized care through Strive's Kidney Heroes™, a high-touch, highly coordinated care team led by nurse practitioners, including registered nurse case managers, social workers, dietitians, pharmacists, and care coordinators.

While holistic person-to-person care is critical to the program's success, Strive's technology model also supports clinicians in improving healthcare access and collaboration. The technology delivers insights to help clinicians identify gaps in care, intervene proactively to avoid acute events and address personal health and geographic and socioeconomic barriers. The result is specialized and comprehensive care, delivered at the right time and place.

Strive's Model Has Yielded Strong Results



20%

REDUCTION IN THE
TOTAL COST OF CARE



42%

REDUCTION IN
HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS

86%

IMPROVEMENT IN OPTIMAL
STARTS OF RENAL
REPLACEMENT THERAPY

The Results*

A decrease in hospital admissions

- 49% of high and complex-risk enrolled members
- 43% of all risk category members

A reduction in emergency department visits

- 16% of high and complex-risk enrolled members
- 21% of all risk category members

Per member per month decrease in total cost of care

- 31% for high and complex members
- 21% for all risk category members

Per member per month decrease in inpatient spend

- 62.1% for high and complex-risk enrolled members
- 52.9% in all risk category members

Patient Care and Satisfaction**

97%

rating for
“quality
of care”

94%

member satisfaction
with “overall staff
rating”

85%

of members
“likelihood to
recommend”

Market Impact

2,000+

PATIENT
LIVES MANAGED

A MIX OF

Rural & Urban

COMMUNITIES

35%

MEMBERS ENROLLED

Medicare Advantage
Federal Employee Program
Commercial Insurance

MORE THAN

\$4 million


SAVED




Future Plans

In 2023, this partnership's geographic footprint will expand to previously excluded regional areas. The partnership will continually work to slow the progression of kidney disease, lower medical costs, and improve and better coordinate the care of an additional 1,200 at-risk kidney patients.

Healthcare partnerships like this will help overcome kidney healthcare barriers by working towards improved access and outcomes. Strive is changing the kidney care paradigm. The model can identify patients earlier, prioritize the proper care at the right time and drive results including significant reductions in total cost of care, decreased utilization and improved quality outcomes for vulnerable kidney disease patients.



**Strive is
changing the
kidney care
paradigm** 



About Strive Health

Strive Health is the nation's leader in value-based kidney care and partner of choice for innovative healthcare payors and providers. Using a unique combination of technology-enabled care interventions and seamless integration with local providers, Strive forms an integrated care delivery system that supports the entire patient journey from chronic kidney disease (CKD) to end-stage kidney disease (ESKD). To help patients, Strive partners with commercial, Medicare Advantage and Managed Medicaid payors; Medicare; health systems and physicians through flexible value-based payment arrangements, including risk-based programs. As of February 2023, Strive serves over 73,000 CKD and ESKD patients across 30 states and partners with over 980 nephrology providers. In addition, Strive's case management and population health programs are accredited by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), and its technology platform, CareMultiplier™, is certified by HITRUST. To learn more, visit [StriveHealth.com](https://www.strivehealth.com).

For more information, visit [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [strivehealth.com](https://www.strivehealth.com), or email info@strivehealth.com.

References

- [1] National Kidney Foundation, <https://www.kidney.org/advocacy/legislative-priorities/federal-investment>.
- [2] Patzer, R. E., & Pastan, S. O. (2014). Kidney Transplant Access in the Southeast: View From the Bottom. *American journal of transplantation: Official journal of the American Society of Transplantation and the American Society of Transplant Surgeons*, 14(7), 1499. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajt.12748>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4167710/>.
- [3] <https://www.kidneyfund.org/all-about-kidneys/quick-kidney-disease-facts-and-stats#:~:text=Kidney%20disease%20is%20the%20fastest%2Dgrowing%20noncommunicable%20disease%20in%20the%20U.S.&text=Kidney%20disease%20is%20one%20of,than%20breast%20or%20prostate%20cancer>.
- [4] <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/race-ethnicity#:~:text=African%20Americans%20are%20almost%20four,failure%20in%20the%20United%20States>.
- [5] <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/race-ethnicity>.
- [6] <https://www.cdc.gov/kidneydisease/publications-resources/ckd-national-facts.html>.
- [7] <https://bmcnephrol.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12882-016-0324-5>.

Notes

- * Compared same members 6 months pre and 3-9 months post enrollment in Strive's clinical programs. Includes all claims and expenses in the respective 6-month periods. Includes Active/Enrolled patients only. Incurred dates through 5/30 paid through 8/30/2022.
- ** >90% patient satisfaction number is based on a market-specific Strive Health patient satisfaction survey of the most complex patients. "Complex" is the highest-risk tier in Strive's composite risk-scoring model, which uses factors such as the Charlson Comorbidity Index, CDC Social Vulnerability Index and prior hospital visits.