

Case Study: A Better Experience for Union Members and Their Families

Pipefitters Local 597: Improving access to quality and affordable care for members and their families

Background

Pipefitters Local 597's geographically dispersed population performs physically demanding work under stressful, sometimes dangerous conditions. Their members needed a healthcare solution that not only treated injury and chronic conditions, but included prevention and primary care.

"We want to support our members health through their entire career and retirement. In addition to our health and welfare fund, we have a pension plan and 401K. The pension plan could also save money by preventing disease and disability to support our members' health and extend their working life."

– Nichole Linhardt, plan administrator,
Pipefitters Local 597

With approximately 21,000 eligible members, Local 597 recognized that health insurance does not equal healthcare access. Offering a direct primary care solution to their members could improve the accessibility and quality of the medical services their members and families need and deserve.

The Challenge

To deliver healthcare to their members, families, and retired population spread across a large jurisdiction, Local 597 began identifying central population hubs where members and their families live. Local 597 opened two health centers, both located within state-of-the-art centralized training facilities in Mokena, IL and Crown Point, IN. This decision has not only made it easy for existing members to access care, but also provides the opportunity to introduce new members early and to engage them in their health at the beginning of their careers.



“It is important to our leadership to provide competitive benefits to our members and their families, and our members really appreciate the convenience and care they get from our health centers.”

- Nichole Linhardt, Plan Administrator, Pipefitters Local 597 -

Injuries Can Shorten Careers

Pipefitting is tough. Disability retirements with neck, shoulder, and hip problems are common. The Fund recognized that providing convenient access to physical therapy would keep the workforce healthy today and reduce injury and long-term disability tomorrow. Decreased disability claims improve the overall financial strength of the welfare fund and leads to compounded savings over time. In its second year, physical therapy yielded a 1.67:1 return on investment.

The Solution

Putting patients in the driver's seat of their health, Marathon Health reduces costs and improves healthcare access and quality. In fact, 42 percent of Local 597's high-risk population are making progress on their health goals. Since opening their health centers, Local 597 has reduced ER visits and hospital and medical claims costs. Members experience little to no wait times at their health centers with longer provider appointments that address the root cause of their health issues.

Local 597 took control of their healthcare by opening onsite health centers. The centers reduce costs associated with the chronic illnesses of their membership and improve access to quality primary and preventive care services. By keeping their brothers and sisters healthy and safe, Local 597 is helping to protect their members and their families, prolong their careers, and ensure the financial viability of the Fund into the future.

Since the Health & Wellness Center's Opening



lower costs for patients with two or more coaching visits



patients with chronic conditions making progress on their health goals



patient satisfaction since implementation