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Feel Partners with Leading Health Plan based in California to drive better outcomes to the Medicaid population

Executive Summary

Mental health support has been extremely challenging for Medicaid beneficiaries in the USA, and California is no different. A shortage of therapists, long driving distances, and high cost make it impossible for the vast majority of beneficiaries to seek help. A trusted LA-based clinic of a leading Californian Health Plan, struggled to keep the Medicaid population engaged with mental health treatments.

The clinic was looking for new ways of expanding access and promoting care management through more effective programs. They decided to partner with Feel, a holistic mental health program, to drive better outcomes for the population. The results of the first round of the program showed a 82.4% increase in life satisfaction score.

Here's how the health plan partnered with Feel to improve access to mental healthcare and increase engagement for the Medicaid population.

Medicaid Population Challenges

Medicaid is the public health insurance program for **low-income populations** and a vital **funder** of both **mental health and addiction services in the United States**. It also contributes to a growing share of the total spending on addiction treatment. Medicaid provides health coverage to millions of Americans; as of March 2020, in California only, the number of enrollees is 10,390,661.

The Medicaid population includes vulnerable citizens such as eligible low-income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly adults, and people with disabilities. They face a lot of challenges such as being unemployed, homeless, single parents, etc., so investing or taking care of their mental health can be perceived as a “luxury”.

“more than 3.61% of the population of California have a severe mental illness”

According to data from the **National Council**, more than 3.61% of the population of California, that's over **1.4 million people have a severe mental illness**, and many of them are among the most vulnerable. Mental health disorders in the **Medicaid population** were the most common condition for which people under age 65 with public insurance reported receiving care, followed by chronic obstructive pulmonary disease/asthma and hypertension.

Also, **mental health disorders are the number one cause of disability worldwide**, causing 400 million work days lost every year. Each claim, on average, accounts for costs of approximately 300K USD, and mental health patients cost insurers \$9k more per year with 4X medical expenses and 6X ER visits.

Mental health disorders also impact physical health and vice versa, with a very high comorbidity rate. According to the **National Council**:

“On average, individuals with behavioral health disorders experience a higher rate of chronic physical health conditions than the general population.”

There is an **urgent need** for easily accessible mental health support because mental **healthcare is one of the most pressing issues globally**. Demand already outstrips supply as a shortage of therapists means individuals are experiencing up to a **4-month delay** before receiving treatment. Also, the existing care model **cannot provide real-time intervention** and immediate care to patients suffering from a crisis.

The leading Californian Health Plan realized that they need to address mental health issues with this population to drive better outcomes and reduce claims and costs.

The Collaboration

To address the limitations of the existing care model, the health plan wanted to find a solution that could prevent mental health disorders such as **stress** or **burn-out**. The partnership with Sentio Solutions aimed to use **Feel** to test whether providing real-time interventions and proper mental healthcare without needing to leave their homes could make a difference.

In July 2019, the clinic began reaching out to Medicaid beneficiaries who were over 18 years old and recently diagnosed with mild to moderate mental health disorders to take part in the 16-week Feel program.

To get accepted on the Feel program, the participants had to complete a screening questionnaire. Exclusion criteria for participation were severe mental health disorders among others bipolar disorder, psychotic disorders, personality disorders, comorbid disorders, psychotropic medication, substance abuse, and any other medication affecting the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS), i.e., medicine for cardiovascular disease, etc.

The partnership aimed to test in the Medicaid beneficiaries:

- The improvement of the therapeutic part with the introduction of objective data and real-time support
- The improvement of access and engagement rate of participants
- The increase in life satisfaction
- The effectiveness of online mental health programs with on-time interventions

What is Feel?

Feel is a **holistic mental health program** for people facing mild to moderate mental health disorders that combines **technology** and **science** to improve a person's emotional state, delivering real-time mental health support when they need it most.

Feel comprises four components:

- Feel Emotion Sensor - a wristband that continuously monitors a variety of physiological signals to understand the wearer's emotional state and patterns over time
- Feel Mobile App - a smartphone app that connects to the wristband to provide real-time support and evidence-based interventions (i.e., mood journaling, breathing exercises)
- Weekly online sessions with a licensed therapist
- Access to an online library of tools and resources to help build resilience and positive long-term emotional habits

The results

The results exceeded expectations. The **conversion rate** to Feel was **four times higher** and the **retention rate two times higher** than for other programs tested in the past. Additionally, there was **only a 25% dropout** rate after the first session which was impressively low.

The Feel program also proved to be a program with **strong engagement**. Clinical key performance indicators showed an **82.4% improvement in life satisfaction** and a **10.5% increase in life quality**.

Engagement key performance indicators based on a weighted average of weekly active users revealed **84.6% of users were active every week** with **92.6% of emotion logs journalled**.

80% stayed in the program after 3rd session

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30% in face-to-face psychotherapy

84.6%

actively engaged weekly active users throughout the program



60%

completed the program (16 sessions)

What program participants said



I learned so much through the Feel Program. I now know how to keep my cool thanks to a friendly App and easy to use Sensor that notifies me of my emotions. My therapist, the breathing exercises, and the material on the app were all very helpful. I feel a bit different!

About Sentio Solutions

Sentio Solutions is a San Francisco based company, which develops biomarkers and digital therapeutics to change the way we diagnose, manage and care for mental health. The company's premier offering Feel, **combines its proprietary Feel Emotion Sensor with evidence-based techniques** to bring a data-driven approach to the field of mental health for the very first time while providing real-time interventions to those in need of emotional and mental health support. Sentio Solutions is backed by top VC firms and has kicked-off deployments with large Health & Life insurers in the USA and Germany. Feel is also involved in many active research projects in collaboration with universities.

To arrange a demo contact us: feelbd@feelprogram.com

Sources:

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