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The Comprehensive Employer's Guide to MSK Solutions

EVALUATING MSK PROGRAM VALUE THROUGH THE LENS OF ENGAGEMENT, OUTCOMES, AND SAVINGS

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The high-cost, low-value state of the MSK industry

Whether your employees spend their work day sitting at a desk, standing for long hours, or routinely lifting heavy objects, chances are high that they may suffer from a musculoskeletal (MSK) condition. With more than one out of two adults affected by MSK pain, employers nationwide have growing concerns about employee health and MSK-related productivity loss, leading many to adopt MSK solutions as a core component of their healthcare benefits (USBJI, 2023).

However, many MSK solutions often fail to move the needle on outcomes and savings. With this low value treatment paradigm and the chronic nature of MSK conditions, **MSK care can be a major cost driver for your benefits spend**– especially if the right solution for your population is not in place.

LOW-VALUE CARE: A $380 BILLION PROBLEM

Does this sound familiar? An employee with MSK pain sees their primary care physician (PCP) or ends up at the emergency room. What follows is a maze of imaging scans, injections and/or opioid prescriptions, referrals to an orthopedic surgeon, and eventually, a trip to the operating room. However, the surgery fails to provide true relief, leaving the employee and your company to pay sky-high medical bills for a failed episode of care.

30%
of MSK imaging scans are unnecessary[2]

Up to **46%**
of back surgeries fail to provide relief[3]

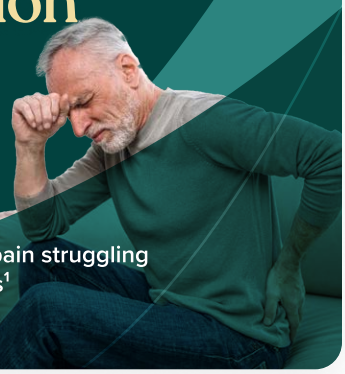
Unfortunately, this is a common case for employers and employees across all industries. When individuals lack access to appropriate care—centered around root-cause analysis and evidence-based treatment—**they get funneled into a cycle of high-cost, low-value care that fails to relieve pain and restore function**.

This destructive cycle of inappropriate care is responsible for:

$380 billion
in annual healthcare spend[4]

364 million
lost work days[1]

52%
of individuals with MSK pain struggling to perform daily activities[1]



This crisis isn't new to the healthcare scene. From 2002 to 2014, the direct costs of treating an individual with an MSK condition increased by more than 44 percent (USBJI, 2023). Moreover, the costs of MSK pain extend far beyond expensive scans, prescriptions, and surgery. The indirect costs, such as lost wages and travel expenses, total up to $159.2 billion for working U.S. adults (USBJI, 2023). Despite recent value-based care moves, **MSK conditions remain one of the top high-cost claims for employers**, forcing companies across all industries to find a better way to care for back and joint pain.

YOU CAN CHANGE THE NARRATIVE FOR YOUR WORKFORCE

From lowering costs to providing long-term relief, **selecting the right MSK solution for your workforce is crucial.** This guide will help you evaluate your program options to determine which features and services will best serve your employees, boost engagement, and ultimately improve outcomes for all.

Finding the right solution: Where to begin

The standard of MSK care has evolved alongside new offerings in the broader healthcare space, with digital solutions taking center stage as a more convenient offering. With multiple options available, the first step in crafting your MSK solution is determining which care modality is best for your workforce.

WHICH CARE MODEL IS RIGHT FOR YOUR COMPANY?

Traditional

Care journeys in this model typically begin with in-person visits, often with a PCP, and expand quickly to include referrals to physical therapists, orthopedic and spine neurosurgeons, imaging centers, and more. This incongruent form of care is well known for inappropriate steerage and unnecessary use of imaging and costly surgeries.

Digital

Digital offerings provide an employee the advantage of receiving treatment from the comfort of home. But there can be critical gaps if the scope of services is too narrow. For example, when employees only receive care from doctors of physical therapy or tech-guided programs, they lack oversight from a medical physician who can escalate (write prescriptions or send for tests) or de-escalate care as needed. As a result, employees enrolled in these solutions still face the risks of inappropriate care and unnecessary healthcare utilization.

Integrated

An integrated care model brings multiple perspectives to the table—such as from a specialty doctor, physical therapist, nutritionist, and health coach–to leverage a more comprehensive view of an individual's MSK condition. This multidisciplinary approach can more easily get to the root of MSK pain, but accessing these teams only through in-person visits can be costly, time-consuming, and difficult to maintain for long periods of time. Virtual integrated care offers the ability for multiple providers to be in the same clinical encounter as the patient, increasing both care coordination and convenience.

Hybrid

Many employees love the convenience of telehealth, but some prefer in-person care. Hybrid care offers employees the freedom to choose. Additionally, while the vast majority of MSK care can be delivered virtually, there are some instances when in-person care may be more clinically appropriate. By allowing individuals to receive care in the setting that best suits their needs, hybrid models naturally improve engagement and outcomes. Moreover, when the hybrid model unlocks access to a multi-specialty care team, employees gain the benefits of integrated care without bouncing around the healthcare system.

Building blocks of your MSK care program

After selecting your care modality, the next step is choosing the **specific features that will define your MSK offering.** The top eight features to consider are:

Physician-led care

Care led by specialty physicians is **crucial to containing costs and improving outcomes**, as doctors are the only clinicians equipped with the knowledge and expertise to diagnose an MSK condition and prescribe the appropriate course of care. This is especially important for the vast majority of employees who will experience MSK pain and need reassurance that their symptoms will resolve with non-operative care. For the small minority of cases that warrant further intervention—or when questions arise during a normal care journey–only a trained physician (which is different than a doctor of physical therapy) can give your employees the trusted guidance they need for next steps. No one else is equipped to lead these conversations.

Having a physician at the helm also allows for seamless collaboration with your employees' other healthcare professionals, such as PCPs. This expert oversight prevents delays in treatment as well as unnecessary utilization of urgent care, imaging, and surgical referrals.

Holistic care model

MSK pain is rarely just a structural problem–especially for chronic cases which afflict more than 1 in 5 adults. Pain is often caused or worsened by an individual's lifestyle, behavioral habits, and other comorbidities such as obesity, anxiety, and depression. Having an integrated care team that includes a physician, physical therapist, nutritionist, and health coach in place who collaborate to address root-cause concerns such as stress, mental health, and healthy weight is key to longer-term results and lower costs.

Non-opioid approach

Back and joint pain are primary reasons individuals receive opioid prescriptions, and opioid addiction is one of the main cost drivers of high healthcare spend. Even a one-day opioid prescription carries a risk of addiction, so choosing **an MSK solution that avoids opioids altogether** can help members achieve sustainable improvement without subjecting them to life-threatening implications. As chronic pain and opioid addiction often go hand-in-hand, solutions that can help provide support for substance use disorder should also be considered.

Real ROI

How is your MSK solution's return on investment (ROI) defined? Is it based on claims data or self-reported pain improvements? Calculating an accurate ROI is difficult when you quantify cost savings using reductions in pain scores. Your solution should utilize objective claims data to clearly define who has improved by how much, and what interventions generate the most value.

Access and equity

Are the MSK care offerings accessible nationwide? How long do employees have to wait for their first appointment? Are there hybrid options available if employees would rather be seen in person or need hands-on care? Does equipment, like motion sensors for physical therapy exercises, have to be mailed out before care can begin? Can the program support multiple languages to maximize engagement with every diverse member? All of these questions should be considered to optimize enrollment.

Member outreach

How does the solution find and engage members? Are there tools, such as artificial intelligence or predictive analytics, to find at-risk members and intervene before their MSK pain snowballs into a long-term, high-cost condition? One of the hardest obstacles to overcome in benefit engagement is awareness. Make sure the solution you put in place has a robust plan to educate and enroll your employees.

Utilization and engagement

Press your vendors to not only show you utilization rates—but define them. If utilization equates to sign ups, what kind of care and experience will your employees receive from that point forward? Are care plans personalized for each member or issued off the shelf based on condition type? How will the solution encourage your employees to adhere to their treatment plans? This is critical in MSK care where non-adherence rates historically run up to 70 percent. Having physicians and clinicians on the care team who practice shared decision-making—meaning they align each treatment plan to reflect what really matters to each patient—motivates members to stay on track.

Security and safety standards

How confident can you be in your solution's compliance and process standards? Certifications and accreditations from organizations such as SOC2, HIPAA/HITECH, HITRUST, and URAC, as well as affiliations with the FDA and APTA provide peace of mind that rigorous standards of excellence are upheld by the vendor.

With Vori Health, employers have every single component of care they need in their toolbelt to drive **maximum value for their MSK benefits.**

Vori Health: Your partner in driving program value

Vori Health helps employers provide their workforce with best-in-class MSK care that caters to every individual's unique needs, preferences, and goals.

Vori Health's MSK program provides evidence-based, whole-person care proven to relieve pain, improve mental health, and drive down the cost of care through avoidance of unnecessary surgery, procedures, and imaging. The Vori Health solution includes every component of care that employers should leverage to drive maximum value for their MSK benefits.

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MUSCULOSKELETAL CARE PROGRAM

PHYSICIAN-LED CARE

Multi-disciplinary care team lead by specialty medical doctors who can diagnose conditions, prescribe appropriate courses of care, and counsel your employees through each step of the care journey.

HOLISTIC CARE MODEL

Highly personalized MSK care from collaborative team of physicians, physical therapists, nutritionists, and health coaches; tailor-made treatment plans that address root causes of pain and align with each member's goals.

NON-OPIOID APPROACH

Only prescribes non-opioid pain medications. For patients already on opioids, provides support for opioid use and addiction through partnerships with SUD solutions.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Up to 4x ROI, based on real claims data, with a low surgical referral rate (less than 3% for low back pain patients), appropriate use of imaging scans, and whole-person care to address comprehensive member needs.

ACCESS & EQUITY

Nationwide hybrid network of in-person clinics in the 200 largest metropolitan areas, in addition to robust telehealth offerings, including appointments within 48 hours accessible on any phone, tablet, or computer. Language support for diverse patients.

MEMBER OUTREACH

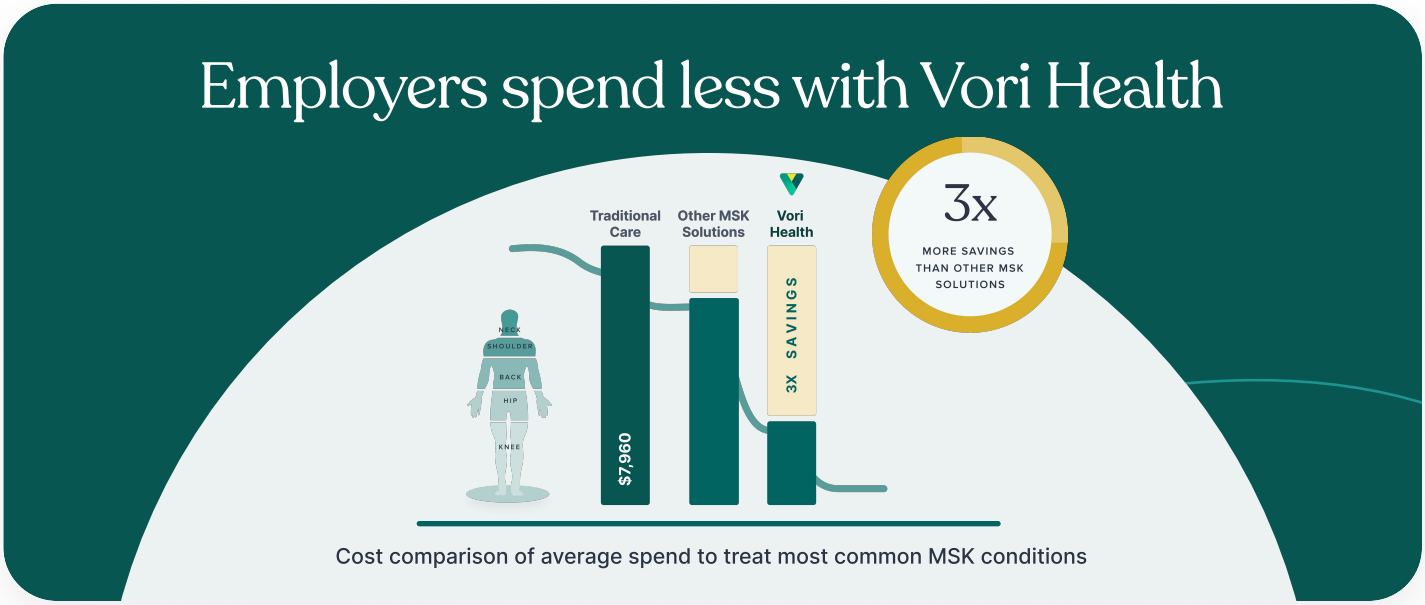
360° member engagement from the first outreach, utilizing artificial-intelligence-powered predictive analytics to find individuals who are in need of rapid intervention with appropriate care before their condition declines.

UTILIZATION & ENGAGEMENT

Industry-leading utilization rates, 85% treatment plan adherence rate (compared to the average of 30%), and NPS of 87.

SAFETY & SECURITY

100% compliant MSK solution with safeguards of a vendor and medical practice in place.



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ABOUT VORI HEALTH

Vori Health is a specialty medical practice delivering a virtual-first musculoskeletal (MSK) solution to help members get back to their lives faster. As the only nationwide MSK practice with doctor-led care teams, Vori Health is the most convenient way to access appropriate care for back, neck, and joint pain without bouncing around the healthcare system. Whether members need a diagnosis, non-opioid prescription, personalized physical therapy, and/or health coaching, they can turn to Vori Health for evidence-based care and effective end-to-end support. Learn how this holistic model reduces unnecessary surgeries, enables faster recoveries, and lowers MSK spend with up to a 4:1 ROI.