



Get Employed, Get Healthy

Description

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Experts estimate that direct medical care affects only [15-20% of a person's overall wellness](#), whereas the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, and work — social determinants of health (SDOH) — play a much greater role. To encourage better outcomes, health plans are working in communities to help address SDOH, including the need for gainful employment.

For example, Community Health Choice (CHC) found the greatest need and desire among their members was to be self-sufficient enough to provide for their families. This recognition led to the creation of [CHC's CareerReady program](#), an investment in the futures of CHC's members and their families that provides support to pursue career and education goals. Participants are given support and guidance as they complete a job certification from Houston Community College or San Jacinto college. Some CareerReady programs include scholarships that cover the tuition, fees, and books. CHC further works with local employers to provide job opportunities, paid internships, and apprenticeships for CareerReady Scholars, making sure they aren't left behind once they graduate.

CHC's efforts aren't only focused on their Medicaid members. Through a partnership with [local nonprofit WorkTexas at Gallery Furniture](#), all CHC members and their families can apply to a program with GED and workshop classes including onsite childcare, allowing them to build practical, technical skills and find a job that will support their health and wellbeing.

UnitedHealthcare has implemented programs to address unemployment and underemployment in Texas. For members with a Home and Community Based Services waiver with an employment benefit, United provides an employment specialist to guide and assist them through the employment process. Additionally, United contracts with providers who offer supportive employment when the Texas Workforce Commission is unable to meet a member's needs. The plan has also recently started a new program in their DFW office to hire adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities into UnitedHealth Group offices.

Through [Project Search](#), UnitedHealthcare also partners with Fort Bend ISD, the Texas Workforce Commission, and Texana (a local mental health authority) to coordinate internships for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are transitioning out of the public school system and into the workforce. The program combines real-life work experience with training in employability and independent-living skills, preparing students for employment in nontraditional, complex, and rewarding jobs that will allow them to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

Bringing work to the unemployed and under-employed helps every Texan by making communities more resilient and giving people the resources they need to stay healthy and out of the emergency room through a steady income and employer-sponsored health coverage.

This article is part of a series on five categories of social determinants of health. Learn more about SDOH and [read our articles](#) on transportation, education, employment, and food to learn more about how each category affects overall health.

Make sure to check out our Texas Covered conference this November, where [our panels on SDOH and health equity](#) will feature experts discussing current issues and solutions to improve health outcomes and reduce the cost of care.

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