



Optum and the Idaho Behavioral Health Plan:

Transforming systems of care
to improve health outcomes



Vision and focus are transforming the health care system

Highlights of the significant accomplishments of the Idaho Behavioral Health Plan (IBHP) and Optum since 2013.



Focus on the foundation of system transformation

- Developed and credentialed an initial network of providers for each region
- Established a 24-7 access and crisis line for members
- Established the foundation for measuring and reporting quality improvement
- Implemented a utilization management program to help ensure members receive appropriate, cost-effective services
- Instituted a utilization review process that identified challenges for providers and modified operational elements to better accommodate service delivery
- Requested provider feedback to be included in system changes



Focus on data to improve health services for members

- Reviewed data regularly to enhance service systems and improve the IBHP
- Improved authorization process to promote better system access
- Established field care coordination with Optum clinicians in Idaho to support providers and offer additional outreach to high-risk members
- Expanded provider support and quality monitoring with increased number of field-based personnel



Focus on promoting member engagement through person-centered programs

- Launched new Peer and Family Support Services to offer recovery-focused services
- Invested in Idaho: \$5M in providing support for low-income housing and \$150K in crisis center services
- Promoted the increased use of evidence-based therapy to improve member outcomes
- Started In Touch Community Conversations, designed to encourage community engagement with important behavioral health issues



Focus on improving accessibility, expanding the continuum of care and providing evidence-based education

- Added Intensive Outpatient (IOP) services to help fill a service gap and prevent hospitalization for those who need more intensive support
- Delivered provider trainings on evidence-based care and offered free continuing education credits to providers
- Implemented the Achievements for Clinical Excellence (ACE) program, focused on rewarding providers for reaching key quality measures
- Improved access by eliminating pre-authorization requirements for select services
- Partnered with Boise, Idaho, school district and Medicaid to offer behavioral health services at schools



The future: Focus on continual improvement

- Continue to increase value through opioid awareness training
- Continue to champion development of mental and physical health integration
- Continue to collaborate and support efforts of the Zero to Three infant and toddler mental health program
- Continue to expand the use of evidence-based skills for all levels of providers with strategic partnerships

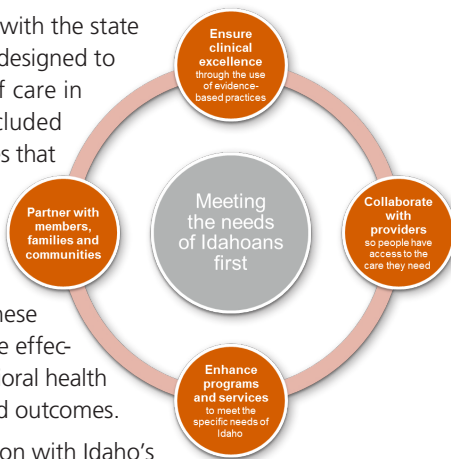
Optum, through the IBHP, holds the vision of transforming behavioral health care in Idaho. This vision includes continually expanding and enhancing services in order to adapt to the evolving needs of the community. Optum is focused on building upon the successes of the past five years. Optum will continue to enhance the well-being of the community and support providers and facilities in promoting recovery-focused service.

More than five years ago, the state of Idaho recognized the need to transform Idaho’s system of care for individuals and families with behavioral health needs. Behavioral health costs were steadily increasing, yet outcomes of care were not improving. The Idaho Behavioral Health Plan (IBHP) was launched in September 2013 to manage outpatient behavioral health services for Medicaid beneficiaries. The intent of the IBHP was to deliver evidence-based treatments while using recovery-oriented and strength-based models of care to best serve members.

To achieve the goals of the IBHP, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Medicaid, partnered with Optum to provide training and support for the existing network of providers. At the same time, Optum engaged community stakeholders to promote recovery and foster well-being for those with behavioral health conditions.

5 years of transformation

Optum’s partnership with the state was built on a vision designed to transform systems of care in Idaho. This vision included implementing changes that foster collaboration among members, providers, and state partners. Since the launch of the IBHP, these changes created more effective delivery of behavioral health services and improved outcomes.



Optum, in collaboration with Idaho’s Divisions of Medicaid and Behavioral Health, developed a model for meeting the needs of Idahoans with behavioral health issues. The four key elements of this model touch on every aspect of Optum’s work. The elements include: clinical excellence; provider collaboration; enhanced clinical programs and services; and member, family and community partnerships.

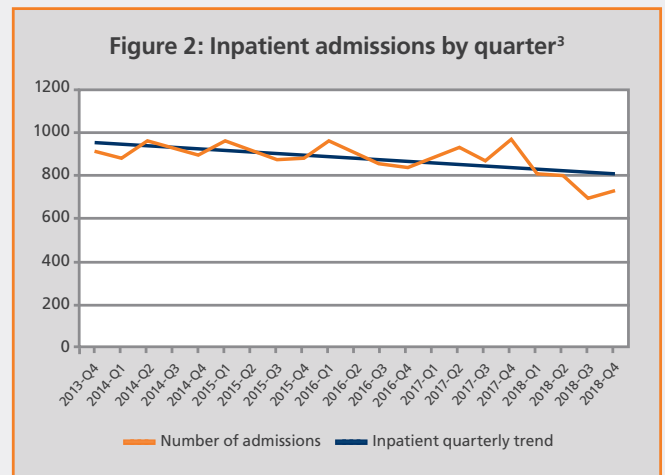
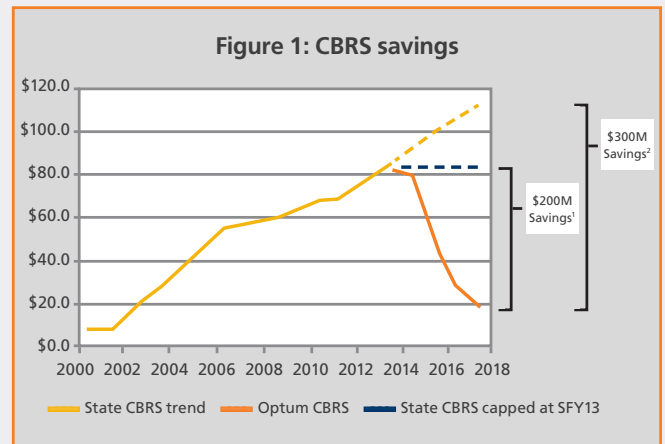
Clinical excellence

To help ensure clinical excellence, Optum developed level of care guidelines based on national standards, which informed decisions and recommendations made by providers and clinicians in the state. The guidelines helped members receive the appropriate level of care for their specific health needs. Optum also worked to coordinate care across the full continuum of health services, including inpatient and outpatient services, to reduce gaps in care and improve health outcomes. Because of these actions, IBHP members avoided unnecessary hospitalizations and out-of-home care, while still meeting their needs. A system-of-care model was also developed to improve the continuum of care for children and youth.

Significant savings to the state

IBHP and Optum achieved a five-year cumulative decrease in spending — approximately **\$200 million less** than what the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare had been spending before adoption of the plan (see Figure 1).¹ A majority of savings came from decreased reliance on community-based rehabilitation services (CBRS). The savings were reinvested in new and expanded programs within the state.

While there had been a reduction in these services, the plan offered new evidence-based treatments and recovery-oriented services as part of its commitment to deliver care that best serves members in the community. In fact, Idaho Medicaid had experienced a reduction trend of member hospitalizations since the launch of the plan (see Figure 2).



Provider collaboration

The voice of Optum's network providers is essential to understanding Idaho's behavioral health system. Optum Idaho's Provider Advisory Committee fostered essential collaborations across the system. These collaborations identified opportunities for new and improved services and generated new provider education and training resources.

As a result of these collaborations:

- Optum and the IHBP initiated web-based and in-person training for provider stakeholders.
- Best practices for referrals and service authorizations in Idaho were developed and streamlined. Periodic reviews drove continuous improvement of the authorization process. Services requiring pre-authorization were reduced from 18 to 5,⁴ thereby increasing access to care.
- Regular opportunities to consult with Optum clinicians on complex cases were instituted.
- Health risk assessment tools used to identify members at risk for higher overall utilization costs and poor health outcomes were developed and implemented.
- Reduced pre-authorization requirements for certain services and web-based authorization processes lessened the providers' administrative burden and increased efficiency.
- Evidence-based practice guidelines were promoted across the network to help providers determine the appropriate level of care needs for their clients.
- An Optum Training and Education division was created to support professional development for providers and other stakeholders. Since Q4 2017–Q3 2018, more than 1,700 providers and staff attended an education offering.⁵ These included: workshops, live webinars, and on-demand courses on topics such as the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) project and evidence-based practices. A new education program on expanding cultural diversity is currently under development.

Optum Training and Education division achievements

- **Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Project:** Provider education programs focused on youth empowerment and recovery oriented services
- **Cultural diversity awareness and cultural competency training (under development):** Training for providers working with diverse populations
- **On-demand training:** Access to free training resources and courses were made available on eLearning platforms that offer Continuing Education Units (CEU) for annual licensure requirements



Enhanced clinical programs and services

The IBHP enhanced the scope of clinical programs and services available to its members. Some of the key programs and services that were developed and expanded include:

- **Telehealth** — Access to providers via telehealth and tele-psychiatry services, including medication management expanded throughout the state. Idaho is considered a Frontier State and the expansion of telehealth services greatly reduced obstacles to care for many members. From the beginning of the expansion in September 2013, through August 2018, the IBHP achieved a 394 percent increase in the number of member telehealth visits.⁶ The focus on telehealth increased access to network providers at all practitioner levels — including MDs, PhDs and Master's-level practitioners.
- **Youth Empowerment Services (YES)** — Expanded services included crisis response, respite care and family psychoeducation, with ongoing development and implementation planned for 2019.
- **Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)** — IOP therapy includes a minimum of three days per week of services (nine hours of service per week for adults and six hours for children/adolescents). This program filled a gap in the continuum of care for members that do not need hospitalization but can benefit from more intensive support.
- **Homes with Adult Residential Treatment** — Optum worked closely with the Divisions of Medicaid and Behavioral Health and to support Homes with Adult Residential Treatment (HART), a specialized category of residential care for individuals with a serious mental illness (SMI).
- **Brief intervention at a medical visit** — The IBHP implemented support for brief behavioral health intervention at a medical visit in any integrated medical clinic statewide.
- **Additional service enhancements** — New programs for opioid education, adult skills building, multi-family therapy, and crisis respite.



Members, family, and community partnerships

Understanding the needs of Idaho’s communities is key to operating an effective program. Optum team members engaged in meetings and events statewide — from routine meetings with behavioral health boards and state hospitals, to community engagement events such as awareness walks and recovery celebrations. Optum’s In Touch Community Conversations in Idaho raised awareness and promoted dialogue about important topics, including adverse childhood experiences and opioids. Optum also leveraged media opportunities to expand awareness through public service announcements and opinion editorials for audiences speaking English and Spanish.

Since the inception of the IBHP, Optum worked to develop relationships with stakeholders and community partners across Idaho. Optum established more than 75 strategic partnerships that reach Idahoans in every community in the state. Optum team members participated in nearly 300 meetings and events through end of the third quarter of 2018.⁷ These activities helped ensure that Idahoans are engaged and have access to the services provided by Optum and the IBHP.

5 years of delivering results

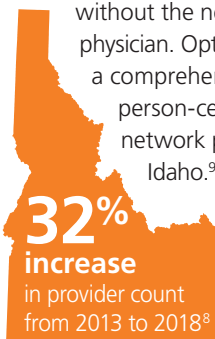
Since 2013, Optum’s recovery-focused, three-level approach has emphasized access to care, quality of service and delivering value to stakeholders throughout Idaho.

Access to care

Access to care for members and their families was a primary goal for the IBHP.



Members were encouraged to take charge of their own care and are empowered to seek behavioral health services without the need for a referral from a primary care physician. Optum expanded care networks that offer a comprehensive scope of evidence-based and person-centered services. It now has nearly 1,600 network providers that serve all communities in



Idaho.⁹ Regional network managers monitor access standards on a monthly basis to help ensure all members in need of behavioral health services have access to those services.

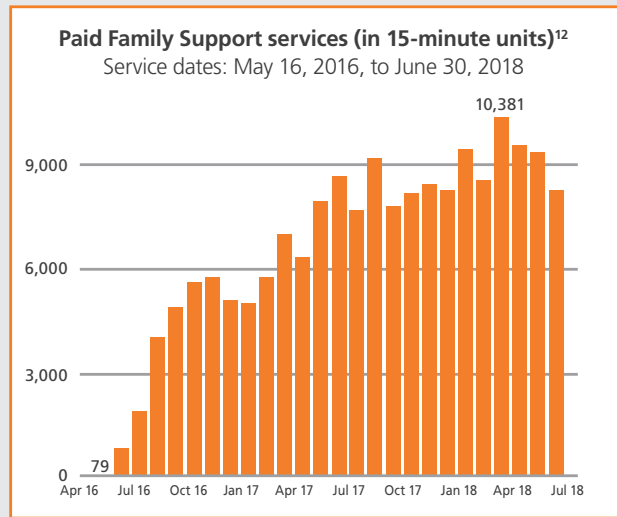
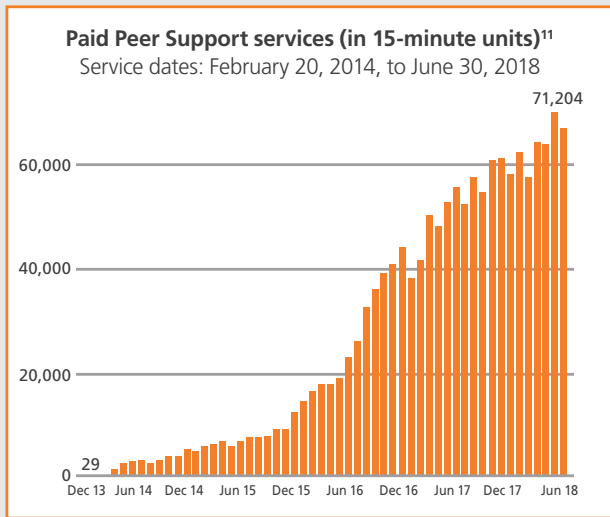
The IBHP created new systems and supports that promote increased accessibility to services for members, which included:

- The expansion of local and regional field staff across all seven Idaho regions. Optum staff worked with providers to: coordinate discharge follow-up for members leaving inpatient services, act as a resource for complex cases, work with community stakeholders to promote services, and assist members and their families with treatment plans.
- The implementation of ALERT®, a wellness assessment program for providers to support effective care treatment options.
- A toll-free Member Access and Crisis Line, which provided 24/7 support and referrals to members experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis. Optum received approximately 500 calls per month on this service.¹⁰

Peer and family support services enhance member recovery

Specially trained Peer Support Specialists use their lived recovery experience from a mental health diagnosis to help adult IBHP members define their goals for recovery and develop a recovery plan. They help members build the skills needed to be proactive in their own treatment plan and connect them with support networks in their communities.

Family Support Specialists use their lived experience as a caregiver to someone with a mental health diagnosis to assist an entire family in its recovery. They help the family develop advocacy skills while fostering the belief that recovery is possible. They help families identify and navigate service systems, as well as develop a comprehensive family recovery plan.



Quality of services

Since the inception of the IBHP contract, Optum met or exceeded 97 percent of the quality performance measures set by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare.¹³ This high level of operational effectiveness demonstrated a commitment of high-quality behavioral health services for Idahoans.

Optum’s performance improvement program seeks continued participation from key stakeholders including members and families, providers and advocates. Setting robust, transparent quality-assurance goals helped ensure a continued focus on performance improvement. Through its efforts, Optum maintained a high level of member satisfaction. Currently, 80.3 percent of members reported satisfaction with their experience in the Idaho Behavioral Health Plan.¹⁴



Value to the state and stakeholders

Optum focused on ensuring that members received appropriate and effective services, while also performing as a good steward of program funding. Using evidence-based clinical standards for utilization management, Optum established a standard of care that helped ensure delivery of medically necessary services while reducing overutilization of some services.

Optum efforts that provided value to members and stakeholders included:

- Development of a pilot program in partnership with the Boise school district that allowed clinical agencies to provide mental health provider services in schools.
- Development of a new treatment certification within the provider network using evidence-based services for infants and toddlers. Participating providers who complete the two-year training would acquire a national credential identifying them as a specialized treatment provider.
- Development of strategic partnerships that leverage and expand existing training resources and support workforce expansion. These partners included: St Luke's Healthcare System, The REACH Institute, Idaho State University and Altarum, an organization that integrates research, technology, analysis, and consulting skills in order to solve complex systems issues to improve the health of diverse and changing populations.

Optum Idaho values the partnership with IDHW, members, providers and community stakeholders focused on improving the behavioral health system in Idaho. Reflecting upon our first five years in Idaho, we are inspired by the partnerships built, the recovery and resiliency witnessed and the innovation achieved, and we look forward to building on current successes with our partners.

For more information about the accomplishments of the Optum-Idaho Behavioral Health Plan partnership, contact Georganne Benjamin at georganne.benjamin@optum.com.

1. Results of an Optum analysis of benefit claims spend for all IBHP members who utilized community-based rehabilitation services (CBRS) from September 1, 2013, to July 31, 2017. Rawlings, July 23, 2018.
2. Optum comparison of benefit claims spend trend for all IBHP members who utilized CBRS to projected CBRS spending trend, based on historical CBRS spending from January 1, 2000, to August 31, 2013, as reported in Design of Idaho Behavioral Health Plan: Evaluating Coverage of Inpatient Care, Office of Performance Evaluations. Idaho Legislature, evaluation report 16-01, January 2016.
3. Admissions for all IBHP members who utilized inpatient services from October 1, 2013, to December 31, 2018, as reported to Optum discharge coordinators by Telegen. Rawlings, Jan. 30, 2019.
4. Comparison of the number of services requiring preauthorization at September 2013 (18) and at August 2018 (5). Woody, Sept. 26, 2018.
5. Total count of providers and staff who participated in an Optum training and education program from October 1, 2017, to September 30, 2018, as reported in the Idaho SR25 Annual Education Report. Wallace-LeBar, Oct. 15, 2018.
6. Results from a Optum October 2018 analysis of all IBHP members who utilized telehealth services from September 1, 2013, to August 31, 2018. Segura, Oct. 1, 2018.
7. 290 meetings and events have been conducted from January 1, 2018, to September 30, 2018, as reported in the September 30, 2018, SR29 Community Partners Report. Olson, Aug. 24, 2018.
8. Based on an Optum October 2018 comparison of network provider counts from September 1, 2013, and August 31, 2018. Hall, Oct. 3, 2018.
9. Optum care networks comprise 1,593 providers, as reported in the September 18, 2018 OR54 Idaho Provider Report Suite. Stahl, Sept. 27, 2018.
10. Based on an Optum September 2018 analysis of the Optum Idaho Weekly Call Statistics Utilization counts from September 1, 2013, to September 1, 2018. Hall, Sept. 28, 2018.
11. From an Optum September 2018 analysis of all IBHP members who utilized Peer Support services from February 20, 2014, to June 30, 2018. Hall, Sept. 28, 2018.
12. From an Optum September 2018 analysis of all IBHP members who utilized Family Support services from May 16, 2016, to June 30, 2018. Hall, Sept. 28, 2018.
13. Optum had met or exceeded 150 of the possible 154 IBHP performance metrics (97%) from January to November of 2017, as reported in the 2017 Idaho Behavioral Health Plan Executive Summary.
14. Results from 226 responses of a 2017 telephonic survey to 1,636 IBHP members that had used plan services, as reported in the 2017 Idaho Behavioral Health Plan Quality Management and Utilization Management Annual Evaluation report.



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