# 🕀 Texas Health<sup>®</sup> | 🎔 aetna<sup>m</sup>

# Connections

March 2021

#### WELCOME

# Seeing the achievements, and the challenge

I'm new here, so introductions are in order. But my career is a story for another day. What matters now is *why* I'm so excited to join Texas Health Aetna in its mission to make health care simpler for everyone: It's because this organization was born to experiment, to innovate, to leverage the mutually beneficial strengths of our parents while directly addressing the health challenges and needs of North Texans. Take a look below and you'll see some of the results of our efforts so far — efforts that I'm thrilled to be a part of. Although our plan is still relatively young we've already made a tremendous difference

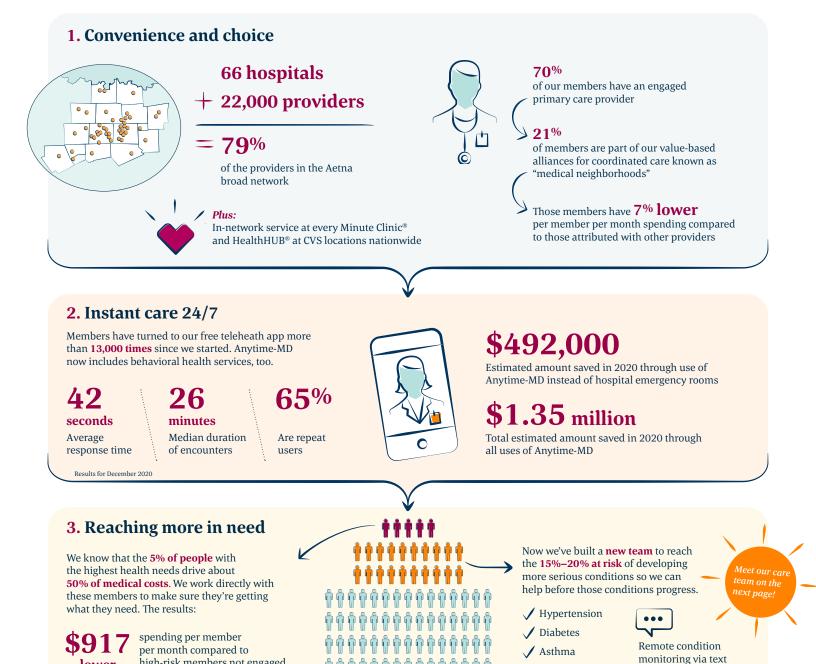


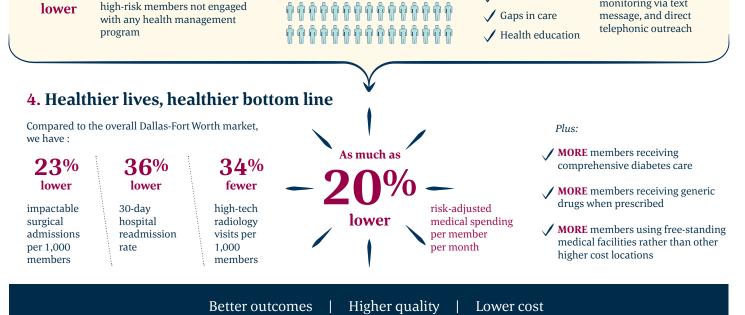
Karl Hess Interim Chief Executive Officer

in people's lives — delivering better health outcomes while controlling costs for members and businesses alike.

We're doing that surrounding and engaging people with the right care, embracing partners who share our commitment to quality and value, deploying the technology that serves rather than supplants, and perhaps above all, relentlessly pursuing new ideas.

We've weathered some incredibly difficult times, and as we embark on a new year with renewed optimism I look forward to meeting more of you and, together, building on such a great foundation.





## FEOPLE Introducing the team that takes care personally

"She was just so used to not feeling well that she thought this was how it was supposed to be." That's how Brandi Washington, a social worker on Texas Health Aetna's care team, described an early conversation with a member struggling with hypertension.

Texas Health Aetna was created to make health care simple, but this woman's life was complicated, stressful, even overwhelming — putting her health at risk. This situation — where a member's needs span medical, family and economic challenges is exactly why we built our own care team consisting of a registered nurse, a social worker and a care manager.

Now we're able to give extra attention to members who show indications that they might be developing more serious health issues, and we'll have more ways to reach them to offer help and guidance.

In this case, the member had enrolled in our in text message-based remote monitoring program, so Brandi was altered to call, and she quickly developed a personal rapport and connection to the member's situation.

"Almost everything in her life was contributing to her hypertension," Brandi said, from family obligations to job stress to fears of having been exposed to coronavirus. On top of that, Brandi learned that the woman was unsure how or when to discuss her health with her doctor. "People often have a fear that, 'If I talk about



Kathleen Duncan Registered Nurse



**Brandi Washington** Social Worker



Kristen Parhm Care Management Associate

it, something will be wrong,' " Brandi said.

Today, with Brandi's help, the member not only has her blood pressure under control, but also got a mammogram and an eye exam, and is back on the job feeling better than she thought possible.

And Brandi's still in touch: "Now when I call and ask her how she is, she says, 'I'm good. *I am actually good*.'"

Brandi was recently joined by two new colleagues, so now our care team is complete:

### For Kathleen Duncan,

becoming a nurse was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream after raising two daughters near Eagle Mountain Lake outside Fort Worth. Joining Texas Health Aetna is a homecoming for Kathleen after several years working at a rehabilitation center, in home care and for a hospital outside Philadelphia. "I worked with patients with chronic conditions, trying to keep them from having to go back in the hospital," she said. It's a great part of nursing." Kathleen is eager to reach more of our members who need help. "I'm a big-time people person. I like making the connections. In this role, I think I'll be able to make a difference."

Growing up on Randolph Air Force Base outside San Antonio, Brandi Washington saw different kids come and go every year from her school. That constant turnover, from kindergarten through high school, fostered a rare talent for making personal connections quickly something that would turn out to be a critical skill for her life as a social worker. "I can quickly start a conversation on just about anything," Brandi said. "It's all about building a rapport with someone." Brandi worked for several years in social work at a hospital and doing home visits for new mothers in Early Head Start, but joins Texas Health Aetna straight from obtaining her master's degree in social work

from the University of Texas at Austin. "I just have a passion for helping others," Brandi said. "It's who I am."

Kristen Parhm joins us from United HealthCare, where she helped seniors fill gaps in their care, solved issues with claims, and, sometimes, just lent a friendly ear. "Some members just called in to talk," Kristen said. "We were there to listen." Kristen was born and raised in Texas ("a little country town called Corsicana"), and has a teenage daughter who runs track for her high school and is about to start the hunt for colleges. One big attraction of her new care team job with us is the ability to really get to know members. "We spend as long as it takes to solve the problem, which has really made me more resourceful," Kristen said. "I love doing research. If someone has a question and I don't know the answer, I'll find it." Like her colleagues, Kristen sees her role as making connections: "I love helping people. This job was meant for me."

## Insurance is complex. His message is simple: Let's talk

Erik Taylor just wants to have a conversation. After more than 20 years in the insurance industry, for giant carriers and even as an agent, he found that most conversations inevitably turn to health care.

"People don't realize how



ways of thinking, and finding solutions that improve lives and profitability. That's could just as easily describe Texas Health too. "This organization has a lot of things that can benefit the community as a whole," Erik said. "The industry has



much we depend on health care if something goes wrong. Beyond getting well, it can bring real financial risk. Health care is so complex, and people can be hesitant to engage with it. We have to give them the tools to make educated decisions about their health."

That's the personal perspective Erik brings to his new role as Texas Health Aetna's Strategic Growth Officer. Just don't call it sales. Erik describes himself as a consultant, taking the time to understand the needs of businesses, challenging old been talking about doing this personal approach for 15 years. It's way overdue."

Now he's eager to share our story. "Health care really is my passion. I cannot wait to tell more brokers about what we're doing over here."

**Erik Taylor** Strategic Growth Officer

Have a question for the Client Success Team, contact TexasHealthAetnaAccountManagement@Aetna.com

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