



Mobile Meets the Eye

Reimagining the DRE



As stewards of taxpayer dollars, we are committed to helping you save money.

With the addition of in-home diabetic retinopathy exams (DRE) to our menu of outreach options, we're strengthened our capacity to help you prevent an unnecessary complication of a high cost chronic disease.



The High Cost of Diabetes

An estimated 34.1 million adult Americans aged 18 or older – approximately 13 percent of the adult population in the United States – had diabetes in 2018.^{1,2} One year earlier, the annual national cost of this disease had risen to \$327 billion, which was a whopping 26 percent increase over the previous five years.¹ And diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness among adults in the U.S., with the highest rates for Hispanic Americans.³

An annual diabetic retinopathy exam (DRE) is important for the prevention and early detection of this serious complication of diabetes. It can also help detect the presence of diabetes among at-risk adults who haven't yet been diagnosed with the disease. The impact of the DRE is one of the reasons DRE rates are a standard measure of health plan quality for both the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Yet only 57 percent of Medicaid and 74 percent of Medicare enrollees received a retinal eye exam in 2018.^{1,4}

Our comprehensive eye care utilization management program seeks to improve these statistics. The program monitors clinical and operational performance for our health plan clients annually to assess:

- Appropriate utilization of care and services
- Access to and utilization of preventive care screenings aligned with early and periodic screening, diagnosis, and treatment standards
- Access to and utilization of DRE



The Old Model of DRE Outreach

When something as simple as an annual DRE can have a profound effect on saving sight, why don't all members with diabetes have one?

In our 25 years managing government eye care benefits for health plans, we have developed several strategies for helping our health plan clients improve health and reduce costs through DRE outreach. We use education and data to remove some of the barriers and improve access to quality care for the best financial and health outcomes.

We've found success in several initiatives we've implemented with our health plan clients to improve HEDIS DRE scores. Here are just a few:



Cobranding member outreach mailings



Conducting vision screenings at health fairs



Managing multi-year, risk-based outreach campaigns with primary care and eye care providers



"These quality diabetic retinopathy initiatives have helped our clients identify early, screen regularly, and treat preventively, to keep members' health up and health plan costs down."

Improving HEDIS DRE Scores

Our four-tier diabetic outreach program has successfully helped our health plan clients reduce costs and improve health for their members.

Tier 2 Project:
Risk-based, multiyear outreach campaign that targeted both providers and members

20.9%

of at-risk members received retinal screenings in the first year

75th

national percentile ranking in years two and three

18%

of targeted members received their retinal exams

19%

increase in overall plan utilization in the four months following the outreach campaign

Step 5: Mobilizing Our Outreach

Unfortunately, some barriers to care pose challenges for members. Transportation, reasonable geographic access to a qualified provider, coverage type (routine vision versus comprehensive eye care), and differences in cultural or ethnic attitudes regarding healthcare must all be addressed in order to accomplish both goals. Academic literature consistently shows that Black and Hispanic Americans are disproportionately at risk for diabetic retinopathy due to a variety of reasons.⁵

Data showed that our four-tier DRE outreach model wasn't helping us reach those members who lack transportation or who live in health professional shortage areas. This is why, in October 2019, we partnered with HealPros to add a fifth tier to our DRE outreach program in the form of portable, in-home DRE screening. HealPros visit members in the comfort and safety of their home.

While in the home, they perform the DRE for diabetic members, as well as other preventive eye health screenings. Working with Guardian and our partners at HealPros can help ensure your members maintain optimal ocular health. And, the HealPros home visit can count towards your HEDIS and Star rating.

An outreach campaign took place between December 2019 and February 2020 that resulted in a DRE schedule rate of just under 75%, which was well above average in comparison to other HealPros campaigns.



Guardian's DRE Outreach Model Now Includes Home Visits



You Deserve a Guardian

Learn how Guardian can help you improve your HEDIS scores, your financial costs, and your members' health by implementing DRE outreach as part of your eyecare clinical management program.



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Sources

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- 2 "Economic Costs of Diabetes in the U.S. in 2017," *American Diabetes Association: Diabetes Care*, <https://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/early/2018/03/20/dc18-0007>, March 2018.
- 3 "Diabetic Retinopathy Data and Statistics," *NIH – National Eye Institute*, <https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/resources-for-health-educators/eye-health-data-and-statistics/diabetic-retinopathy-data-and-statistics>, July 2019.
- 4 "Comprehensive Diabetes Care (CDC)," *NCQA*, <https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/comprehensive-diabetes-care>, accessed July 2020.
- 5 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5945200/>, accessed July 16, 2020.

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