Plenty of health plans offer health coaching. UPMC Health Plan takes it to a new level.

It’s called Prescription for Wellness. And it ingeniously leverages the doctor-patient relationship to encourage members to enroll in lifestyle and condition management coaching programs. Physicians refer their patients to the programs. The result? Members take action and get comprehensive guidance to improve or maintain their health and manage chronic conditions. And that can lower employer health care costs and improve workforce productivity.

The challenge employers face

Research shows that 75 percent of employer health care costs are the result of chronic diseases that have unhealthy behaviors as their root cause. The key to bringing down those health costs? Change the behaviors that lead to them.

The question is, how?

With UPMC Health Plan’s Prescription for Wellness, physicians write a prescription for a UPMC Health Plan health coaching program. And we’re seeing great success.

The power of the provider

UPMC Health Plan members are 10 times more likely to successfully complete their health coaching programs when referred through Prescription for Wellness than when they self-refer or are referred by UPMC Health Plan.
Doctor prescribed, health coach supported, employee directed. That’s Prescription for Wellness, from UPMC Health Plan.

How the program works

Prescription for Wellness happens in three simple steps:

1. The doctor or staff member writes the patient a prescription during a regular office visit.
2. An electronic notification goes immediately to the UPMC Health Plan health coach.
3. The health coach connects with the patient — in effect “filling the prescription.” As the health coach works with the patient over time, he or she keeps the doctor updated on the patient’s progress.

Employees usually meet with their health coach by phone. The health coach can then guide and motivate the employee to:

- Lose weight
- Get more active
- Quit smoking
- Reduce stress
- Fight depression
- Manage a health condition

Conditions covered by Prescription for Wellness

Physicians can write prescriptions to several UPMC Health Plan health coaching programs, including:

- **Behavioral health**
  - Examples: depression, anxiety, ADHD, substance abuse
- **Condition management**
  - Examples: diabetes, heart disease, asthma, low back pain
- **Maternity**
  - Examples: prenatal classes, breastfeeding support, tobacco cessation
- **Lifestyle improvement**
  - Examples: weight loss, physical activity, tobacco cessation, stress management

Employees who are UPMC Health Plan members can call or visit their doctor and ask for a Prescription for Wellness today at no additional cost.

For more information on this unique health plan benefit, contact your account manager or broker. Resources are also available on Employer OnLine, our secure employer web portal.

The power of the health coach

When smokers use health coaching along with medication to help them quit, their chance of quitting doubles compared to using medication alone.

With UPMC Health Plan’s weight loss health coaching program, more than 40 percent of participants lose at least 5 percent of their body weight. This amount of weight loss may reduce type 2 diabetes risk by 61 percent.