



Healthcare's New Quality of Life Focus: Contact Centers are Valuable Tools in New Healthcare Paradigm

A recent *Wall Street Journal* [article](#) by Laura Landro reports that health care professionals are turning their attention to the quality-of-life of patients with chronic illnesses, like asthma and heart disease, as part of their medical care.

"Numerous studies show that when people have a higher sense of well-being, they have fewer hospitalizations and emergency-room visits, miss fewer days of work and use less medication. They're also more productive at work and more engaged in the community," said Landro.

This translates into cost reductions for patients and health care plan providers, and decreased demand on medical professionals' time. Recognizing these benefits, policy makers have even included \$3 billion in funding for a new Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, which will use quality-of-life measures as part of its evaluation of new treatments.

Health plan providers can take advantage of this change in focus by applying this concept to their programs. While they do not replace the role of trained healthcare professionals, skilled contact center agents acting as 'Healthcare Advocates' are in a prime position to assist with quality-of-life issues in the following ways:

- **Proactive patient outreach** – Trained healthcare advocates can skillfully and sensitively address quality-of-life related issues with beneficiaries and report this data back to providers and other stakeholders.
- **Coaching and education** – Healthcare advocates can efficiently disseminate information to plan members, and play a cost-effective role in situations where frequent check-ins are beneficial to the patient's overall care.
- **Maintaining personable connections** – Healthcare advocates that regularly communicate with plan members provide a direct link between the provider and the patient. The quality and value of this relationship can greatly increase retention and referrals, while simultaneously reducing medical costs.

As a key touch point, the value of a one-on-one connection between a patient and a healthcare advocate cannot be understated. Utilizing a contact center to maintain that relationship will help control costs and enhance service as providers seek to adopt this new paradigm.