

# NEWS RELEASE



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*For Immediate Release*

## **WellMed and UnitedHealthcare Improving Patients' Care in San Antonio**

- *Accountable care approach to enhance patient care by improving communication and collaboration across the health system*
- *More resources committed to sharing information and coordinating patient care*

**SAN ANTONIO (March 1, 2016)** – WellMed and UnitedHealthcare have launched an accountable care program in the Alamo City to improve people's health and increase their satisfaction with their health care experience. WellMed is part of OptumCare.

The joint effort – one of only two such accountable care initiatives in the Alamo City region – will focus largely on dedicating more resources to care coordination and making it easier to share important health information so that every doctor involved in a patient's care is supporting the same treatment plan.

UnitedHealthcare and WellMed's accountable care program changes the incentives for how medical care is funded, transitioning from a system that reimburses for quantity of services provided to one that rewards the quality of patients' health outcomes and has the potential to reduce overall costs. Nationally recognized health care writer and researcher Dr. Atul Gawande highlighted the WellMed Care Model last year in the [New Yorker](#) magazine, noting that WellMed physicians are rewarded based on a whole-patient approach that emphasizes preventive health care – a model shown to reduce hospital and emergency room visits while improving health outcomes for people 65 and older.

More than 10,000 people enrolled in UnitedHealthcare's employer-sponsored health plans are eligible to benefit from this collaboration with WellMed.

WellMed is a health care delivery network serving more than 220,000 patients in Texas, New Mexico and Florida. WellMed provides an innovative medical approach by directly offering care to patients at primary care and multispecialty clinics. WellMed also supports thousands of independent physicians through its medical Management Services Organization (MSO).

“Together with UnitedHealthcare, we expect to achieve even better health outcomes and improve patient satisfaction, while reducing the overall cost of care,” said Dr. George Rapier, WellMed chairman and CEO.

Many people who have gone to the doctor or hospital – particularly those with complex or chronic illnesses – have found they often have to connect information from each of their doctor’s visits themselves, and have sometimes received duplicative tests or care that isn’t coordinated.

Through this collaboration, UnitedHealthcare and WellMed will work closely to better coordinate patient care, using shared technology, real-time data and information about emergency room visits and hospital admissions, and services designed to help patients manage chronic health conditions and encourage healthy lifestyles.

Patient navigators may also be used to support community-based care coordination, such as helping with planning after a patient is discharged from the hospital and scheduling follow-up appointments.

“Thousands of UnitedHealthcare plan participants turn to WellMed to receive quality, compassionate care, and with this new accountable care program we can help ensure that people receive more personalized and better connected care,” said Dave Milich, CEO, UnitedHealthcare of South Texas. “Putting more resources into how their care is coordinated, and paying their care providers based on the quality of care and health outcomes, will significantly enhance people’s ability to live healthier lives.”

UnitedHealthcare serves more than 4 million Texans with a network of 514 hospitals and more than 67,000 physicians and other care providers statewide.

More than 13 million people enrolled in UnitedHealthcare plans across the country have access to accountable care programs, delivered in part through more than 750 accountable care arrangements nationwide as the organization engages in deeper, more collaborative relationships with physicians and hospitals.

Care providers nationwide are showing strong interest in a shift to value-based care. UnitedHealthcare’s total payments to physicians and hospitals that are tied to value-based arrangements have tripled in the last three years to \$45 billion. By the end of 2018, UnitedHealthcare expects that figure to reach \$65 billion.

For more information about UnitedHealthcare’s full spectrum of value-based initiatives, visit [www.UHC.com/valuebasedcare](http://www.UHC.com/valuebasedcare).

#### **About WellMed**

WellMed Medical Management is a 25-year old physician-led healthcare delivery company serving 220,000+ patients in Texas and Florida through primary care clinics, multispecialty clinics and contracted medical management services. Most patients are Medicare-eligible seniors. Founded in 1990 by noted physician Dr. George Rapier III, the vision of the growing enterprise is to change the face of healthcare delivery for seniors. WellMed is part of OptumCare, a business of health services leader Optum.

#### **About UnitedHealthcare**

UnitedHealthcare is dedicated to helping people nationwide live healthier lives by simplifying the health care experience, meeting consumer health and wellness needs, and sustaining trusted relationships with care providers. The company offers the full spectrum of health benefit programs for individuals, employers, military service members, retirees and their families, and Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, and contracts directly with more than 1 million physicians and care professionals, and 6,000 hospitals and other care facilities nationwide. UnitedHealthcare is one of the businesses of UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH), a diversified Fortune 50 health and well-being company. For more information, visit UnitedHealthcare at [www.uhc.com](http://www.uhc.com) or follow @myUHC on Twitter.