

UnitedHealthcare's Triple Aim Focus Adding More Value for Lab Services

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More affordable procedure costs, shorter wait times, higher quality – everyone wants these things from their health care experience. UnitedHealthcare's Triple Aim focus – improving health care affordability, outcomes and the patient experience – is now adding more value for lab services.



Consider this. Laboratory services are often the starting point to any medical procedure. During a doctor's visit, a physician will recommend lab work about 50 percent of the time. These tests might include blood work like a complete blood count (CBC) or a thyroid panel. It may also include biopsy results or a genetic test which also happen in a lab. When a physician orders these tests, labs are often chosen based on habit or historical practice and the physician may not realize there could be a more affordable, higher quality option to offer to their patients.

UnitedHealthcare is working to make it easier to identify and choose lab providers who have committed to the Triple Aim within its broad network of more than 300 labs nationwide. Through the newly established Preferred Laboratory Network (PLN), physicians and their patients are likely to receive better health care value through improved access, quality and service at a lower cost. The creation of the PLN is an advanced way to work with selected lab providers to deliver care that places a greater emphasis on patient outcomes and the total cost of a person's care.

Launching on July 1, 2019, UnitedHealthcare has selected the following labs to participate in its PLN: AmeriPath/DermPath, BioReference, GeneDx, Invitae, LabCorp, Mayo Clinic Laboratories and Quest Diagnostics. These labs were selected based on a rigorous quality review process.

How it impacts UnitedHealthcare consumers:

There is no change in lab access for consumers – consumers can still use a lab that is not in the PLN. However, choosing a lab in the PLN may lead to shorter wait times for services, online scheduling for patient service centers, higher quality of care and lower cost.

Services accessed through the PLN are at a lower average cost than other lab providers. For example, pathology services for a biopsy in the PLN would cost about \$90. Consumers could still choose a lab not in the PLN, but the cost would increase to about \$150. An out-of-network lab would cost more.

How it impacts physicians:

We expect physicians who refer to labs in the PLN to notice prompt turn-around times for lab results, ease-of-use when ordering labs electronically as well as easy access to physician-to-lab medical director consultations to support patient care. They will not need to do anything different to access services from these providers. Those participating in the PLN will be designated in UnitedHealthcare's provider directories.

All of the participants in the PLN will be measured quarterly on their performance.