

Carenet Health & CHRISTUS Health

Personal outreach boosts employee engagement and resiliency during crises.

Background

CHRISTUS Health is a Catholic, not-for-profit health care ministry made up of more than 600 centers including community hospitals, urgent care centers, health insurance companies, and physician clinics. The health system works to deliver compassionate, high-quality healthcare and to improve the health of the communities it serves—including its own population of 45,000 Associates and more than 15,000 physicians.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, CHRISTUS's leaders were committed to providing their Associates with the support they needed to feel safe and protected while in the workplace and to building community through a system-wide focus on a culture of belonging, resiliency and well-being.



CHRISTUS Health needed a confidential, supportive method to address Associate resiliency but didn't have a structured behavioral health service line to respond appropriately to Associate needs. CHRISTUS wanted a way to say thank you, provide emotional support, and give access to internal resources to its Associates—for both current and future needs.

Challenge

CHRISTUS Health was concerned about the well-being of its clinical Associates, especially during the pandemic, as the realities of providing care heavily impacted its nurses, clinicians, and other essential personnel. As part of its commitment to good stewardship and compassionate care, CHRISTUS wanted to make sure Associates felt cared for and supported as they provided lifesaving care to the community.



“Using Health & Wellness Campaigns for Associate, not patient, outreach was new. Our **trusted relationship** provided the foundation to dream and learn together in kinship and partnership. The CHRISTUS Health Associate Wellbeing Check-in Program **wouldn't be possible without a partner** who was able to think creatively and take a risk with us.”

George Avila,
System Vice President,
Mission Integration, CHRISTUS Health

At the same time, CHRISTUS leaders noticed a lot of staff were not using their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefits, which included counseling as a free service to all employees. Seeking a way to proactively reach out to Associates to offer these benefits, the organization realized its EAP was not set up to perform a high volume of outbound calls. Additionally, as part of their commitment as a Catholic Health Care ministry to heal mind, body, and spirit, CHRISTUS Health wanted a mechanism to connect Associates with board-certified chaplains to provide spiritual and emotional support.

Solution

Carenet Health previously performed clinical outbound calling for CHRISTUS Health patient visitation follow-ups, so we were a natural partner for this new challenge – to proactively reach out and check in with its clinicians and nursing staff, offering them comfort, counseling, and support.

Carenet and CHRISTUS designed a brief series of questions and an approved emotional guidance script with a menu of responses, appropriate actions, and follow-ups for Carenet's agents to use as a reference when performing the outbound calls. Providing comfort, and when needed, a referral to the EAP and/or warm transfers to CHRISTUS chaplains, were the goals of the program.

The CHRISTUS Health Associate Wellbeing Check-in Program became a multidisciplinary project that crossed department lines and involved mission integration, learning and development, wellness, change management, and strategic marketing and communications. CHRISTUS corporate strategic marketing agreed to fund the pilot program for Carenet's team to make outbound calls and effectively expand the CHRISTUS EAP offering by providing personal, individual well-being checks.

Results

The initial pilot program reached out to Associates in Southwest Louisiana and San Antonio, Texas, areas where natural disasters had recently occurred, and stress levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic were high. Carenet made more than 2,000 Associate calls, spoke with 400 people, and received 100 inbound calls.

Although the campaign did not yield a large number of Associates wanting to speak with a chaplain or use the EAP, it yielded CHRISTUS Health something they deemed extremely valuable--positive reception from its Associates who knew that CHRISTUS leadership cared enough to reach out to them individually.

Communicating concern about Associate wellbeing can lead to greater employee morale, loyalty, and retention. CHRISTUS tracks Associate satisfaction through employee engagement surveys that include questions on resiliency and sense of belonging. This information, along with data collected by Carenet, is helping CHRISTUS to create an index on resiliency and sense of belonging, to use as a preventative tool.

One medical center Associate noted, "This has been a rough time, and it's great that the company I work for is concerned about my well-being. I don't need a referral at this time but will keep this information handy." Another Associate said, "I appreciate the phone calls from corporate checking on our well-being and to recommend the EAP if needed."

A Carenet nurse counselor added this about the CHRISTUS Health Associate Wellbeing Check-in Program, "This concept is truly another show of CHRISTUS' dedication to its employees. As a registered nurse, many times as clinicians we rarely put ourselves first. This is a great way to help those clinicians think of themselves, if only for one minute."

With such positive early reviews, the expectation is that the program will remain a powerful resource to improve employee engagement, foster resiliency, demonstrate compassion from leadership, and help reduce employee turnover.

With funding approved for the entire ministry, the CHRISTUS Health Associate Wellbeing Check-in Program will be system-wide, starting in locations that are experiencing critical situations. Associates and staff will be able to submit a ticket through their portal, My CHRISTUS Life, for episodic or individual needs. This is just one of the many ways in which CHRISTUS Health lives out its mission to extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ.



Carenet's Health & Wellness Campaigns offer a flexible, easy way to manage highly complex and personalized campaigns for organizations like CHRISTUS Health who lack the time and resources to manage individualized outreach. Carenet offers multilingual, clinical, and non-clinical live voice services that can reach out to patients or staff struggling with isolation, stress, trauma, and other health issues amidst crises. We can also provide information on services, care, medication instructions, and continual communication through proactive outbound calls and messages, online chat, and by answering inbound calls.

About CHRISTUS Health

CHRISTUS Health is a faith-based, not-for-profit system made up of more than 600 centers, including long-term care facilities, community hospitals, walk-in clinics, and health ministries. We are a community 45,000 strong, with over 15,000 physicians and medical staff providing individualized care.

Sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in Houston and San Antonio and the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, our mission is to extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ to every individual we serve.



Carenet Health

Learn More

Carenet Health is the nation's premier healthcare clinical and consumer engagement partner—providing 24/7 telehealth, engagement, clinical support and advocacy solutions on behalf of 250+ health plans, providers, health systems and Fortune 500 companies. More than 65 million healthcare consumers have access to our teams of engagement specialists, care coordinators, RNs and other licensed healthcare professionals each year.

How Can We Help Your Organization?

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