

Questions from Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness

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For additional information

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When you talk about tracking outcomes, are you tracking whether referrals are completed, the ultimate outcome of the client's condition, or both? - Al Ratcliffe

When we talk about tracking outcomes, we're talking not about the status of the referral, but the outcome of the services delivered based on that referral made. When you send a referral in Unite Us, the recipient organization "takes action" on that referral, so you'll know once a referral has been accepted (meaning the organization is ready to start working with your client to address the need identified). But once services have been provided for that referral, the ask from the referral recipient is to close the case with structured information indicating: (1) was the need resolved or not; (2) the structured outcome based on that resolution status and the type of service; (3) any additional helpful information in a related note.

Any liability issues that have been raised to date? - Al Ratcliffe

There have been no liability issues raised to date. The Network Participation Terms and Conditions, which are electronically signed by each organization before accessing the software platform, outline each organization's responsibilities when coordinating care on the network and include our standard liability language. These include standard terms associated with joining a software platform, including terms regarding permitted and prohibited uses of the platform and confidentiality and security.

How do you get funded? - Sara Irish

The networks are funded by a variety of health systems, health plans, government agencies, foundations, and other community stakeholders. Community-based organizations and most federally qualified health centers are able to join the network at no cost.

Who pays the bills? How is the pricing structured?

CBO? Are they interested in funding a LARGE implementation of a coalition as broad as ours? - Greg Walker

The network is funded through partners such as Community Health Plan of Washington and Kaiser Permanente. Access to the network/platform is provided at no cost for CBOs and most community health centers. There is not a limit to the number of CBOs who are able to join for free; members of coalitions such as yours are very welcome to participate.

Are you coordinating with Elevate Health (ACH)? I suggest you request an opportunity to demonstrate your platform to the Elevate Health Community Advisory Council. - Al Ratcliffe **Has Elevate Health (aka: ACH of Pierce County) been invited to join?** - Janet

We have been in conversations with Elevate Health about how to work collaboratively in Pierce County, and they have participated in the community information sessions held. We are looking forward to continuing our conversations with them!

Will Unite Us connect with WithinReach or parenthelp123? - Janet

Unite Us has had conversations with WithinReach, as a key partner in the regional King County CIE work. While they will not be participating in the network at launch, both organizations are interested in exploring how to partner in the future.

How does it “work” with existing referral systems - 211, etc.? - Maureen Howard

Unite Us has robust relationships with 211s in different communities. This has included 211s participating in the network to direct referrals, or providing “out-of-network” information for those organizations who aren’t ready to participate. We are reaching out to regional 211s to explore potential partnership opportunities!

Readability grade level of consent form? If necessary, how is form content explained to the client? - Al Ratcliffe

The consent form is reviewed to meet a fifth-grade reading level to ensure accessibility for all users. Unite Us recently conducted a review to modify some of our consent language to address concerns of readability. Additionally, all users are trained on how to access and use the platform, including how to obtain

informed consent and how to explain to a client what the informed consent means.

Regarding Unite Us, I also curious what steps have been taken in the system to be alert to the issues of equity, to ensure that this new software system won't simply perpetuate current inequities? - Rob Huff

Achieving health equity is a guiding priority and core value of Unite Us. Unite Us supports the advancement of health equity through our shared, community-wide infrastructure, providing community leaders and policymakers with the tools they need to collaborate across sectors to achieve their goals. In turn, care providers can make sure people get the services they need: access to healthy food, employment, housing, and other supportive services. Our community-level data can be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and geography, and used to pinpoint health inequities in service types, populations, and other focus areas. In the coming months, we will be working to establish Community Advisory Committees for the network to ensure there is a dedicated space for network partners and key stakeholders to discuss these issues.

This work relies on developing genuine, lasting partnerships. Unite Us recognizes the work that's already been done, and partners closely with existing collaboratives, coalitions, and community leaders (such as you all!) to implement customized solutions appropriate for a given community. Unite Us also acknowledges the power of history and employs engagement strategies that mitigate the risk of building upon or exacerbating inequalities and inequities that may already exist.

We're happy to also provide the attached overview of how Unite Us can support state efforts to advance health equity.

What are the safety measurements in place for individuals being referred, HIPAA/PII etc .? - Sherri Jensen

The Unite Us platform is HIPAA, FERPA and SOC 2 Type 2 compliant, addressing the necessary criteria to ensure the safety and security of the information that flows throughout the system. Unite Us takes Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Protected Health Information (PHI) very seriously. We encrypt and secure all data in our platform, in-transit and at rest. We have implemented internal and external privacy and security policies adhering to HIPAA guidelines, and we work with third-party consultants to regularly review our administrative, physical, and technical safeguards. In accordance with HIPAA guidelines, we undergo an

annual Risk Assessment and Penetration Testing. Additionally, we sign Business Associate Agreements (BAAs) with providers in our networks that provide health-related services and are considered a Covered Entity under HIPAA, as well as any applicable workforce member (Amazon Web Services, Google, etc).

What about participating organizations' level of technology...hardware, training, support? - Maureen Howard

This is a web-based software, so all you'll need is access to the internet and a laptop/desktop/tablet to access. The Unite Us team will provide ongoing training and user support for all software users (e.g. regular webinars, online courses, live chat support to answer questions in real time).

Congratulations on developing a product that will really help Healthcare. What I'm wondering is how does this help Human Services meet the needs of our clients better? - Walter Washington

Although access to this network is funded by healthcare partners, Unite Us was actually first developed for social services providers, and only moved into the healthcare space more recently. Our platform was built with social services providers in mind; you'll see that nothing about the platform is particularly targeted toward the healthcare sector. We believe that having a common platform to more easily connect community members to needed services and collaborate with other partners around shared clients benefits all organizations working to address needs and improve health and economic stability in their communities. Participating in a network like this also: (1) provides partners a way to demonstrate their impact not just through the services provided at their organization, but through the referrals made and outcomes of services provided because of those referrals; and (2) allows communities to highlight where there are gaps in services that are directly impacting community members to help figure out solutions and potentially direct funding to address those gaps.

How fast can the program eligibility change? for instance, the new eviction moratorium is different from the one that just expired. Who puts the new info in? - Maureen Howard

Partners have access to their own profiles to keep this information up to date in the software to help ensure that appropriate referrals continue to be sent to them as information changes. Our network health team will also look at trends in data to identify organizations who may need assistance in updating their profiles. As a

network standard, partners typically agree to generally review their information on a regular basis (e.g. quarterly).

Super great that it works alongside HMIS> Does the technology integrate WITH HMIS? I'm wondering what the impact of having multiple systems would be. Are we tracking referrals, notes, etc in multiple systems or does the ability to integrate and communicate with each platform exist? - Sherri Jensen

Unite Us is built in such a way (using APIs) that we can integrate with other platforms. We have active integration with multiple EHRs, have integrated with case management systems like Salesforce, and are open to having conversations with others who are interested to understand the desired supported workflows! We don't yet have an active integration with an HMIS system, but are in discussions with a couple in other geographies. Most of the partners who participate don't have a live integration; using Unite Us and participating in the network serves to replace the manual process that they use to send and follow up on referrals today (e.g. fax, multiple phone calls to the partner and/or client, emails that get lost, etc.). While it is certainly true that this will mean double entry for some information for many partners, they still find value in the time saved in other areas (i.e. the process of actually making the referral, and following up on the referral to understand what happened to their client).