

# 3 STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYERS TO ADDRESS POTENTIALLY AVOIDABLE ED USE

## CURRENT STATE

### CONFUSION ABOUNDS

Consumers are unsure where to turn when they need care and don't have (or don't know about) resources to help them determine where to go.



## KEY STRATEGY

### ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS AND EDUCATION

Focus efforts on increasing consumer knowledge regarding different levels of service: **what they are, what they cost, when to use them.** Promote the benefits of a **relationship with a primary care provider.**

Work to increase consumer engagement by providing clear, consistent, and **actionable information** in accessible, plain language that is aligned across partners. Feature messaging on many platforms to resonate across consumer populations, and encourage trusted sources to disseminate information to maximize impact.

**1 IN 3**  
recent ED-visits were for a non-emergency condition according to survey respondents

### MISALIGNED INCENTIVES DRIVE COSTLY BEHAVIORS

Complex benefit plans complicate consumer decision making.



### REVISE BENEFIT DESIGN

Ensure that consumer **out of pocket costs align with value** when designing benefit plans. Out of pocket cost decisions should encourage the use of the right site of service at the right time. Communicate the availability of **alternative care sites** and telehealth frequently. Financial barriers should not inhibit patients from accessing emergency care when it is necessary. Wherever possible, benefit design features should **spark and motivate increased consumer engagement.**

**30%**  
of Massachusetts employers increased cost sharing in 2018 to control health care costs

### ACCESS ISSUES HINDER APPROPRIATE CARE

Many consumers visit the ED because they can't get an appointment with their provider or need care outside of office hours.



### IMPROVE ACCESS

Provide **convenient options** for care other than the ED (unless clinically necessary). This includes advocating for **access to primary care** whenever possible, offering **telehealth** benefits to consumers who desire it, and ensuring that alternative sites of care are available and accessible to patients.

**72%**  
of recent non-emergency ED visits were for care needed outside of normal business hours

# EMPLOYER TACTICS TO IMPACT ED USE



## ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS AND EDUCATION

Employers can:

- Promote the benefits of establishing a primary care home
- Highlight plan-specific information on cost share by site of service
- Share information on “how to know where to go”
- Routinely communicate availability of telehealth or other services that aim to reduce potentially avoidable ED use



## REVISE BENEFIT DESIGN

Employers can:

- Encourage employees/members to choose a PCP or provider of choice
- Ensure out of pocket cost for ED balances the need for access when appropriate, while also discouraging inappropriate use
- Consider reducing or eliminating out of pocket costs for primary care, convenience/walk-in clinic/urgent care, telemedicine
- Consider tiered networks that encourage the use of high-value PCPs



## IMPROVE ACCESS

Employers can:

- Designate a private space in the workplace for telehealth visits
- Consider whether to offer an onsite or near site clinic benefit
- Use web-based service to connect employees to alternative care sites

## ABOUT THE COALITION

Founded in 2018, the Coalition is an employer-led effort that, together with our Strategic Partners, seeks to use our collective influence to uncover solutions that drive real change in the health care delivery system and reduce costs. Our members include business organizations representing thousands of large and

small employers across Massachusetts. Many thanks to our Steering Committee members for providing the insights and recommendations that led to these strategies. For more information on the Coalition, Strategic Partners, Steering Committee, and our work, please visit [maemployerhealthcoalition.com](https://maemployerhealthcoalition.com).