

Portico Benefit Services Used Data and Innovation to Address Emotional Well-Being

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Benefit Services | A Ministry of the ELCA



ABOUT PORTICO

Portico Benefit Services provides retirement, health, and other related benefits and consultative services to employees of faith-based organizations. Portico partners with over 6,000 employers all around the country, providing benefits to more than 46,000 individuals, including rostered ministers, churchworkers, social-ministry employees, and their families.



Artemis Health offers a next-generation platform for healthcare and benefits analytics. Our tools make it easy for employers and their trusted advisors to improve the health and wellness of employees and their families.

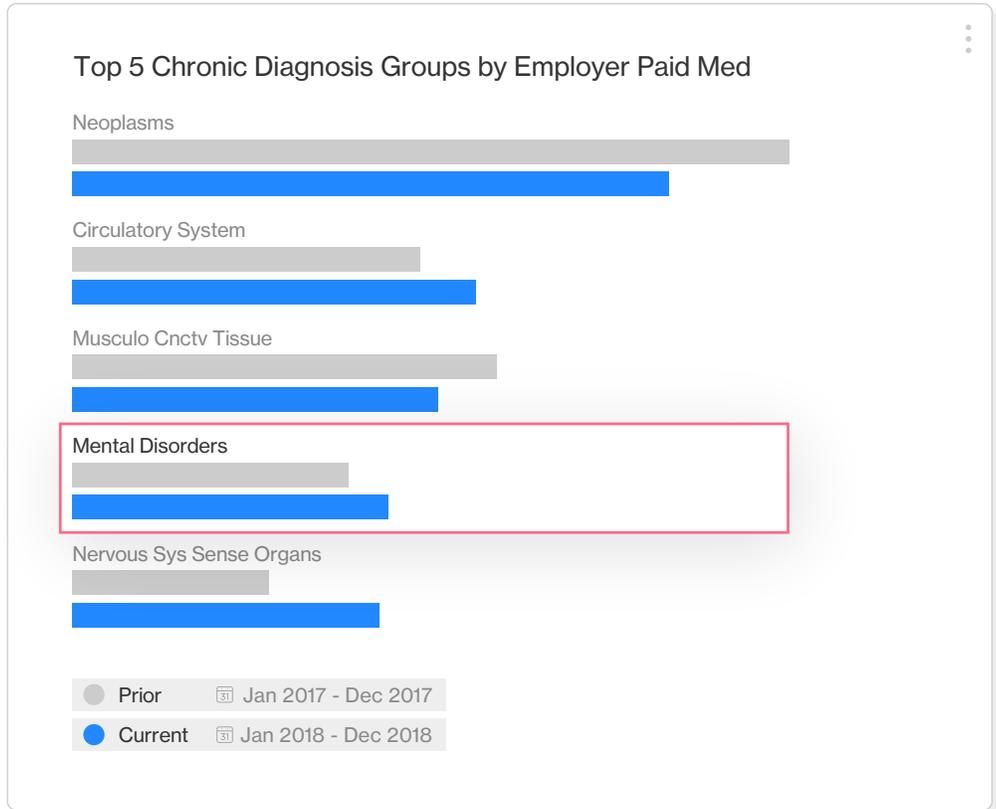
How the benefits ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) leveraged quantitative and qualitative member data to address its members' well-being, including the unique emotional stresses of rostered ministers.

The opportunity.

The work of ELCA rostered ministers and other churchworkers is emotionally rewarding and challenging. They support individuals in their congregations and communities by listening and offering emotional support while also helping their congregations navigate changing financial realities, generational needs, and the continually changing ELCA landscape. They may do this in relative isolation, coping with geographic separation from colleagues. They balance the need to maintain professional boundaries while also being deeply connected in the communities they serve.

These challenges are not unique to the ELCA community. A study published by the Journal of Primary Prevention in 2013, which compared the mental health of United Methodist Clergy in North Carolina to a representative sample of Americans, concluded clergy taking the survey had a rate of depression of 8.7% — significantly higher than the national sample of 5.5%.¹

While studying high-cost medical conditions to identify opportunities to address health issues for members, Portico's benefit professionals flagged three important health benefit indicators: 1.) higher-than-average Employee Assistance Program utilization², 2.) high levels of self-reported anxiety and depression³, 3.) using the Artemis Platform, by Artemis Health, to analyze health claim data⁴, behavioral health conditions were identified in Portico's top-five diagnoses by cost.



With the cost of behavioral health conditions increasing year over year, Portico's benefit professionals took a deeper dive, revealing increases of 6.7% for mood disorders, 6.3% for anxiety disorders, 8.9% for adjustment disorders, and 5.6% for other mental health diagnoses from 2017 to 2018.

DATA FINDINGS:

6.7% ↑
Mood Disorders

6.3% ↑
Anxiety Disorders

8.9% ↑
Adjustment Disorders

Diagnosis Groups Level 2 (CCS)	Sum Employer Paid Amount (Med)	Count Enrolled Members	Count Enrolled Members
16 Items	▼ Add Filters	▼ Add Filters	3.4% ▼ Add Filters
<input type="checkbox"/> Hide "No Value" Row			
Mood disorders	-	-	6.7%
Anxiety disorders	-	-	6.3%
Alcohol-related disorders	-	-	-6.6%
Adjustment disorders	-	-	8.9%
Miscellaneous mental...	-	-	5.6%
Substance-related dis...	-	-	-14.5%
Disorders usually diagn...	-	-	-2.2%
Attention deficit condu...	-	-	-2.5%
Suicide and intentional...	-	-	-28.9%

Clearly, additional support was needed to address the members' entire continuum of mental health care needs—from check-ins and support for at-risk members, to more direct interventions for those with chronic conditions. Portico's benefit professionals determined a proactive approach to help members, including rostered ministers and other churchworkers, get necessary care.

The solution.

Portico's benefit professionals searched for wellness programs designed to provide confidential, early intervention for those at-risk for behavioral health conditions and support members already receiving treatment. They identified two innovative wellness solutions:

- 01** A holistic video learning platform called the Being academy, offered by The Big Know, supports comprehensive well-being by delivering short video courses taught by best-selling authors and leading researchers.
- 02** A clinically validated online, self-directed Cognitive Behavioral Therapy mental health program offered by Learn to Live, which offers five different treatment tracks: depression, anxiety, sleep, stress/worry, and substance abuse.

Portico chose to implement both solutions in 2020 for those with chronic conditions as well as those needing solutions to everyday stress.

To personalize the Being academy for its membership, Portico partnered with The Big Know to add faith-based elements to most of its courses and to add two new custom courses to its curriculum:

- **A course on gratitude and spiritual recharging taught by religion and culture scholar, Diana Butler Bass**
- **A course on vocational well-being featuring ELCA rostered ministers sharing ways to avoid burnout and grow as spiritual leaders**

"I was very excited when I first saw the depth and breadth of Portico's new Being academy," reflected Deacon Sue Rothmeyer, Secretary of the ELCA. "We want those who serve our church to care for all dimensions of their wellbeing, and the Being courses speak to each of those. I also view it as a rich resource for synod offices, rostered minister gatherings, congregations and seminaries to use as a learning and discernment tool."





42 minute
Avg Engagement Time

The results.

Initial engagement for both solutions is impressive. Members are engaging for 15-minutes longer on average than The Big Know's book of business. There has been high engagement in the Learn to Live program.

Portico will continue to monitor behavioral health claims data through the Artemis Health tool to determine if the addition of these programs influences behavioral health services utilization and claims costs.

"We know there is no such thing as a 40-hour work week for most of our members; the demands of their calling make self-care difficult. We need to deliver programs that focus on more than just working out and eating well. Learn to Live and Being resonate with our members, and can help them lead a life of holistic well-being. Leveraging Artemis Health to spot gaps and measure success helps us to continually improve our Portico solution."

Josh Smith
Head of Products at Portico Benefit Services



Portico will continue to promote Being and Learn to Live to create awareness and reach more members while leveraging qualitative and quantitative measures to improve upon holistic well-being.

References

[1] The Journal of Primary Prevention Using Effort-Reward Imbalance Theory to Understand High Rates of Depression and Anxiety Among Clergy. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10935-013-0321-4>

[2] Employee Assistance Program by Beacon Health reported Portico's EAP utilization reached over 6.7% in 2018. Trends suggest average utilization ranges between 4.5 and 6.5% (Chestnut Global Partners, Trends Report 2017. <http://chestnutglobalpartners.org/Portals/cgp/Publications/Trends-Report-April2017.pdf>)

[3] Portico's Vendor Partner's Health Assessment Responses and self-reported data 2016-2018.

[4] The Artemis Platform aggregates claim utilization data and does not release personal health information in accordance with HIPAA regulations.

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