

# **5 Considerations for Selecting a Care Management Implementation Partner**



As a core tenet of managed care and a primary lever for controlling utilization and cost, care management remains an integral component of a holistic approach to managing individuals within a modern health plan. Yet with the changing healthcare landscape and rapid evolution of care management technology solutions, it can be challenging to select the right solution and successfully implement and integrate that solution to realize intended benefits.

After working with dozens of health plans to successfully assess, implement, operate, and optimize their clinical programs, from care management and utilization management to population health, several considerations have surfaced as crucial characteristics of an effective implementation partner. A partner that makes this investment work well for organizations and more importantly, their members.

**Discover five important traits health plans should consider when selecting a care management implementation partner.**



# 1

## **Demonstrable Experience & Availability of Resources**



Choosing an implementation partner that has demonstrated experience successfully executing similar solutions at organizations like yours significantly increases the probability of effective care management implementation.

Health plans operate in complex and often non-standard ways. The impact of choosing a service provider that collectively understands the nuances of healthcare insurance operations and employs multiple experts who have skillfully navigated such environments cannot be overstated.

If a potential partner indicates they have the necessary experience, personnel, and tools, it is also important to investigate whether those resources will be available for your organization's implementation. Large service providers have a pool of talented professionals with the ability to elevate care management. Consider whether they possess the best experience and knowledge fit for your organization and if they will be materially available for your implementation.

## Breadth & Depth of Clinical Expertise



Healthcare continues to evolve at a torrid pace, and many of the most exciting advancements are in population health. Healthcare organizations are looking at members more holistically and moving toward integrated care models that include behavioral health, social health, and complex care needs.

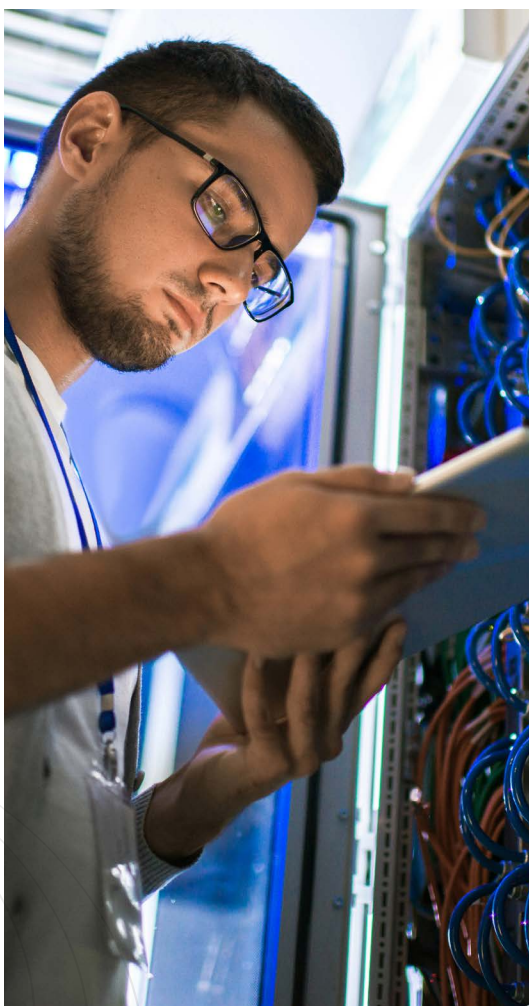
Doing so requires understanding the underlying drivers that impact physical, mental, and social well-being. Ensuring selected clinical platforms can address the needs of evolving care models is pivotal for providing ongoing compliant, coordinated, whole-person care.

Developing truly impactful models of care that are financially sustainable is no easy task. It's wise to find an implementation partner that knows the clinical elements of care and how to translate them into technology solutions. In-depth knowledge of the current healthcare landscape and experience implementing and operating new updated models in the ever-changing healthcare environment are vital to success.

Choosing a technology platform solution is just one step to ensuring effective care management and delivering improved population health outcomes. Insight on how care delivery is evolving—funding changes, updated requirements, streamlined and automated operations, and innovation—and how individual health plans are impacted could have a material effect on the platform implementation. Select a partner that has not only the industry expertise and knowledge of the technology, but also the applied understanding and hands-on experience.



## Practical & Specialized Technical Competencies



The information technology footprint at most health plans is overly complex, reliant on manual processes, expensive, and difficult to maintain or continually update. When an organization is considering a new platform implementation or upgrade, it truly is an organization-wide transformational effort.

Because each team is unique in how it operates and builds the infrastructure to support IT operations, there is no standard playbook for implementing or transitioning to a new healthcare technology platform. Health plans should choose an implementation partner who recognizes the complexities of these transformational efforts and is comfortable navigating and successfully managing them.

An implementation provider should possess in-depth knowledge of clinical operations, supporting systems, and interdependent technologies such as core claim administration systems, enterprise data management and integration, and electronic data interchange (EDI) techniques and tools. Proficiency in industry best practices and the particular care management platform chosen for implementation are essential as well.

An implementation partner should be able to provide beneficial technical perspectives and expertise coupled with practical recommendations in line with each organization's unique culture and operating environment.

## Industry Relationships



The definitions of population health and care management continue to evolve and expand. These changes are partially driven by the further development of complex populations, evolving member expectations, co-dependent relationships between solution providers, government and industry entities, and related compliance standards.

Incumbent technology solution providers must innovate or risk being left behind while new voices have entered the conversation. All of these changes and innovations have created a sense of urgency for health plans to find partners that can help them maintain compliance, manage performance, keep pace, and push forward.

The new normal of continuous change has put significant pressure on all organizations operating in the care management space to not only stay current but also continue to meet the commitments of their clients. The healthcare industry is just as vulnerable, if not more so, to talent and resource shortages as any other industry in the United States.

Therefore, it's essential, especially for small to mid-sized health plans, to choose an implementation partner with in-depth knowledge, well-developed relationships, and a history with the vendors and solutions they are considering. These relationships can be a major contributor in getting the optimal attention and necessary support from technology solution providers.

## End-to-End Capabilities



The transformational journey to implement a new or replace an existing care management technology solution has many highly interrelated stages. Each phase of the journey from strategy and solution selection to implementation planning, execution, operationalization, and optimization, is critical to the ROI of a health plan's investment.

Health plans often take different approaches to resourcing and partnering for each stage of a solution implementation. However, this often creates gaps in continuity due to poor transition point hand-offs, misaligned incentive models, and overreliance on internal resources for capability and capacity.

If a health plan works with one partner for strategy development and a different partner for implementation, the strategy may sit idle due to the difficulty of translating that strategy to a realistic plan of action. The challenge lies with ensuring the original strategy and its inherent assumptions are executed in a way that aligns with the plan's culture and operating model.

This challenge can be mitigated by leveraging the same implementation partner for all implementation stages to develop a top-line, cost-effective strategy that leads to benefit realization. Finding a solution provider offering full spectrum support throughout the entire care management transformation journey will significantly increase the likelihood of better outcomes for an organization and ultimately, its members.



# Want to embark on your own care management transformation?

Selecting an implementation partner with these core capabilities will allow health plans to have a more stable care management implementation with a predictable path to benefit realization.

Connect with Clearlink today.



843-779-6702



[info@clearlinkpartners.com](mailto:info@clearlinkpartners.com)



[www.clearlinkpartners.com](http://www.clearlinkpartners.com)

## About Clearlink Partners

Clearlink Partners is an industry-leading managed care consultancy specializing in end-to-end clinical and operational management services and market expansion initiatives for Managed Medicaid, Medicare Advantage, Special Needs Plans, complex care populations, and risk-adjusted entities.

We support organizations as they navigate a dynamic healthcare ecosystem by helping them manage risk, optimize healthcare spend, improve member experience, accelerate quality outcomes, and promote health equity.

## Managed Care Made Clear™

170 Meeting St, Suite 110, Charleston, SC 29401

