HealthNow Administrative Services Implements Benefit Informatics’ Data Analytics Technology for Financial and Clinical Analysis

Deal marks its first use of clinical predictive modeling.

HealthNow Administrative Services, a national third-party administrator of self-funded benefit plans, has implemented web-based data analytics technology from Benefit Informatics to consolidate multiple data sources and provide clients with integrated plan analysis and reporting. Specifically, HNAS now utilizes online software-as-a-service applications from BI – a Benefitfocus company – to analyze plan data and provide analysis, reporting and plan design alternatives for self-funded employer clients. HNAS was also the first administrative services organization to enable advanced clinical functionality, the company adds, featuring the Johns Hopkins Adjusted Clinical Groups System for clinical predictive modeling.

“Since implementing Benefit Informatics’ data analytics technology into our operations, we have seen the benefits of integrating claim, eligibility and clinical predictive modeling on one platform,” comments Chris Moyer, director of analytics at HNAS. “With the addition of the advanced clinical functionality, we are very excited to help our clients analyze and predict future risk and costs for their plans. Our goal is to help our customers proactively manage risk and assess performance. With Benefit Informatics, we offer our clients a comprehensive analytics package to better manage their health plans and control costs.”

Benefit Informatics data analytics technology allows HNAS account managers, analysts and consultants to monitor, analyze and forecast plan activity and costs for clients across the nation, a statement from the pair says. Standard and ad hoc analysis and reporting applications let HNAS users assess risk for plans and groups and drill down into specific procedures, providers and diagnoses. Because the applications are located within a secure online system, data and reporting can be executed, scheduled and shared securely, the statement continues, with self-funded plan administrators. Moyer adds: “Benefit Informatics and its data analytics technology have become an important component of our operations. They play an important role in helping us enhance our customer reporting and communications and have helped in winning new clients. We view our relationship with Benefit Informatics as a valuable partnership in our continued growth.”

Predictive Modeling News talked to HNAS’ Marilyn Fooshee, senior analytics & plan modeling specialist, to get some details about the arrangement.

Predictive Modeling News: What was HNAS using before implementing web-based data analytics technology from Benefit Informatics?

Marilyn Fooshee: HealthNow utilized a variety of adjudication system-generated reports to prepare client reporting in Excel. The underwriting department worked in concert with the analytics team to prepare the final reports for delivery to our clients.

PMN: Did BI predictive modeling capability replace another vendor’s? Did HealthNow look at other sources of PM capability besides BI? What did BI offer that other providers of PM capability did not?

MF: HealthNow did not utilize clinical predictive modeling prior to becoming the first Benefit Informatics customer to implement the clinical predictive modeling application. We have worked with BI for over a year and have had incredible success with other BI analytics applications. It was a natural progression for us to select Benefit Informatics as our predictive modeling partner, as all of our data are integrated into its data warehouse. Benefit Informatics’ familiarity with our claim adjudication system, data intricacies and reporting needs make BI an excellent partner. There were no other vendors considered for this capability because of the partnership and excellent relationship we have with BI.

PMN: Is HealthNow the first – or one of the first –of BI’s clients to implement the ACG system? The statement says that “we have seen the benefits of integrating claim, eligibility and clinical predictive modeling on one platform.” What are those benefits.

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MF: HealthNow was the first client to implement Benefit Informatics’ advanced clinical functionality featuring the Johns Hopkins Adjusted Clinical Groups System, as we immediately saw the value of adding the application to our existing analytics capabilities. Currently, we are utilizing the advanced clinical functionality as an enhancement to the plan modeling and forecasting we prepare for our clients. This allows us to better predict the client’s expected costs going forward based not only on plan design but clinical predictive modeling as well. Having our claim, eligibility, plan modeling and clinical predictive modeling on one platform provides a way for us to collaborate with our clients, broker consultants and stop loss carriers to better manage risk.

PMN: What specific benefits has HealthNow seen from integrating BI’s ACG-powered PM capability?

MF: Prior to BI offering the ACG-powered PM capability, HealthNow experienced increasing requests from brokers and clients for clinical information that would aid in monitoring plan expenses, disease management programs and wellness initiatives. Johns Hopkins’ ACG predictive modeling is one of the most respected and trusted sources of data in our industry. Traditionally, predictive modeling resources have been unavailable, limited or out of reach for self-funded clients unless they had a member population in the thousands. With the implementation of the advanced clinical functionality, we are able to provide our clients, brokers and consultants the information they were asking us for and are better prepared to predict risks and manage costs.

PMN: What specific elements of health plan activity can account managers monitor, analyze and forecast with BI’s PM capabilities?

MF: HealthNow has a dedicated underwriting and analytics team that works closely with the account management team to provide reporting, plan modeling, forecasting and clinical information to our clients. We are unique in this approach, and the collaborative effort provides depth of experience and insight into our client’s plan experience, expected costs and benefit needs going forward. Predictive modeling reflects a different perspective on high claimants, allowing us to utilize clinical predictions for expected costs versus retrospective review of plan dollars already spent. Using advanced clinical functionality with the ACG system, we monitor members who may or may not be in compliance with expected treatments for their specific disease states. In addition to high claimants, we monitor individuals with seemingly innocuous claim histories who are not typically high utilizers of healthcare resources. However, as co-morbidities begin to present in the low-healthcare-utilization-member population, we are better able to predict the potential for increased plan costs or high claims to occur.

PMN: How important is predictive modeling becoming to running a health benefits program?

MF: Predictive modeling is an extremely important component of health plan management. As healthcare spending continues to increase, clients are seeking ways to better allocate their healthcare dollars effectively. While retrospective review of claim expenditures is important, a prospective approach utilizing clinical predictive modeling and benefit plan modeling proves much more effective in easing the burden of predicting future plan costs. In addition to monitoring expected versus actual expenses, the capability to monitor predicted expenditures helps us communicate the anticipated plan costs much more timely than before. Clients are no longer willing to wait until an annual review of their healthcare plan expenditures to determine how they should budget for the upcoming plan year.

HNAS is an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of HealthNow New York Inc., a health insurance carrier. Visit hnas.com and benefitinformatics.com