



Spring 2021

# IMPACT REPORT

*Transforming the health of the community, one person at a time.*

## Partnering to feed a community

Nebraska Total Care has created a partnership with Hastings Middle School and Fork Farms to meet a critical need for food stability and access to fresh produce for children and families in the Hastings area.

Close to 60% of Hastings Middle school students receive free or reduced lunch. The closing of local grocery stores in recent years has caused a food desert in parts of the community, so even when families are able to afford fresh produce it isn't always available for purchase.

Fork Farms is an agriculture technology company that helps healthcare and hunger relief organizations improve health outcomes by growing produce indoors year round. Their Flex Farm units were serving communities in 22 states and Canada, but none in Nebraska.

With our shared commitment to providing adequate and healthy food options, Nebraska Total Care purchased a Flex Farm hydroponic garden for the Hastings Middle School community garden. Installation included a year's supply of seeds and plants, and K-12 curriculum that included STEM, innovation, and health-oriented lesson plans. The machine was installed in February 2021 and with the support of teachers, students, and the community it can:

- Grow up to 25 pounds of food every month
- Harvest up to 3,400 plants annually
- Produce 45x more food than traditional agriculture
- Circumvent seasonal limitations, such as freeze, drought, and pests
- Provide students opportunities to develop teamwork skills and network with the community
- Teach students the benefits of giving to others



Hastings Middle School is already growing approximately 280 starter plants each month. A portion of these starters have been transplanted to their outdoor community garden and greenhouse. The remaining starter plants are shared with members of the community to create their own gardens at home, allowing others to produce their own food for an entire season.

*“The Fork Farms tool helps us meet our mission to build community through food and education. We throw stones and it creates ripples that impact people.”*

*~Jayson Stoddard, Hastings MS teacher and Garden Director*



Nebraska Total Care recently visited Hasting Middle School to see the progress. The students have taken ownership of the project, and spoke with pride about their ability to support their neighbors and be leaders in their own community.

## DR. WENDY WELCH, MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Nebraska Total Care is excited to welcome Dr. Wendy Welch as the new Medical Director of Behavioral Health. Dr. Welch is building her knowledge of Nebraska health priorities, but has already begun to make a positive impact on the care members receive.

Dr. Welch has over 30 years of experience in the medical field. Prior to joining Nebraska Total Care, she served as the Chief Medical Officer for Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, a Medicaid specialty plan in North Carolina. Throughout her career, she has held a variety of leadership positions within managed care and academia. In addition to her role at Nebraska Total Care, Dr. Welch is currently a Co-Editor for the ASAM Criteria, 4<sup>th</sup> edition and a Distinguished Mentor for Stanford University School of Medicine's new Master's Degree program in clinical informatics.

Dr. Welch is a proud cat parent, an amateur photographer, and consistently in the running for the title "World's Best Aunt". In their free time, she and her husband enjoy cooking, hiking, and kayaking.

In addition to ongoing initiatives, Dr. Welch is working with clinical leaders to improve access to medication-assisted treatment for addiction. This will be especially critical for the Heritage Health Adult members, where utilization of substance use treatment is proportionally higher.



*"I am so grateful to be a part of this high-performing, dedicated, and fun team. I am learning from everyone and eager to see what we will accomplish together."*

## PROVIDER IMPACT CONTINUING EDUCATION

Nebraska Total Care has dedicated employees to support the continuing education of our behavioral health providers, both mental health and nursing professionals. Available trainings include on-demand records and live, scheduled trainings. All on-demand trainings and the live schedule are available on [NebraskaTotalCare.com](https://www.NebraskaTotalCare.com).

### Training topics include:

- Cultural Competence
- De-escalation Techniques
- Integrated Health
- Positive Psychology
- Provider Accessibility
- Psychotropic Medication
- Recovery Principles
- Screening Tools
- Social Determinants of Health
- Strength-Based Treatment
- Substance Use Disorder
- Trauma Informed Care
- Treatment & Documentation Guidelines

Highest attended behavioral health trainings in 2020  
(presented virtually)

Training	2020 Attendees
Motivational Interviewing, Pt 1	67
Ethics for Mental Health providers	61
Motivational Interviewing, Pt 2	50
Mental Health First Aid	48
Behavioral Health 101	28
Stages of Change	26
SMART Goals	23
Adverse Childhood Experiences Study	23



# Member Impact

Kim, a Care Manager at Nebraska Total Care, was supporting a young member with serious mental health concerns. The child had already been hospitalized several times, worked with multiple different therapists and psychiatrists, and received residential care. Nothing had led to a sustained relief from his symptoms and his mother was again worried about the safety of her child.

It appeared that the only option to keep the child safe would be to again place him in residential treatment. While this level of care is sometimes necessary and can be helpful, it is also extremely hard for children and parents, and can create new problems to be resolved. Additionally, due to the member's young age and the fact that residential care had already been tried without lasting impact, there were no placement options close enough for his mother to see him consistently and be actively involved in his treatment plan. She was understandably overwhelmed and anxious that her only options appeared to be giving up access to her child, or continuously being afraid for his safety.

Kim gathered a team of professionals, including Dr. Welch, the Nebraska Total Care Behavioral Health Medical Director, to identify potential solutions for this young member. Working with the family, they built a comprehensive in-home treatment plan that would give the member and his mother the support they needed to let him stay safely at home.

The family has worked incredibly hard with their treatment team, and in a few months they have already seen progress. Safety concerns are manageable, which allows for more stability in their home. They are able to spend time doing fun family activities, and are strengthening their relationship through positive experiences.



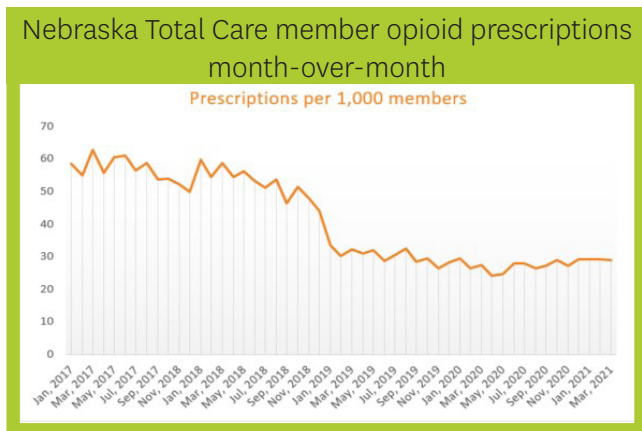
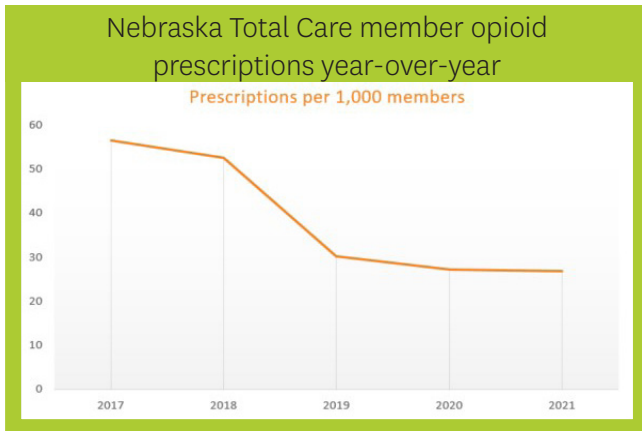
# QUALITY IMPACT

## HEALTH OF MEMBERS

In 2018, Nebraska Total Care identified over-utilization of opioid medication as an imminent risk for our members and communities in Nebraska. Opioid medications are a useful option for pain management, and the Nebraska Pain Management Guidance Document provides clear guidelines for appropriate prescribing levels. However, opioid prescriptions were increasing in Nebraska, and frequently beyond recommended limits.

Knowing this would be a long and difficult process for many members, Nebraska Total Care began implementing initiatives to gradually decrease opioid prescriptions. Providers were given education and consultation on alternative pain management plans, while members were also supported through Care Management and preventive education.

**After two years of activity we have seen sustained reduction in the prescribing of opioid medication through Quarter 1, 2021. Opioid prescriptions per 1,000 members decreased from a high of 62.72 in March 2017 to 24.08 in April 2020. Prescriptions have remained under 30 members per 1,000 since September 2019.**

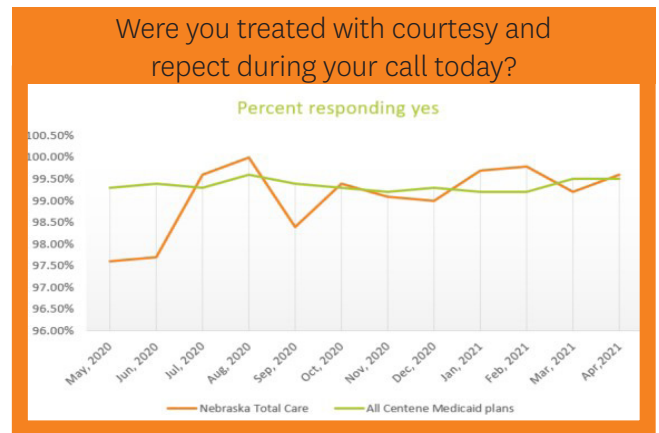


Note: Members being treated for cancer and other palliative conditions are not included in interventions.

## SERVICE TO MEMBERS

Calls to our Member Services line is the primary means for members to access assistance with their benefits and ask questions about care. It is critically important to Nebraska Total Care that the service they receive meets their needs on every call.

Quality of service through the call center is tracked through a survey at the end of every call. Questions determine if members felt respected and received the help they requested. Members have responded positively over 90% of the time for the previous year.



Additionally, we monitor wait times and the length of calls, to ensure member time is respected. Service level tracks how consistently we meet the goals related to these call standards. Over the last year, our Member Services team worked to move service levels above 95%.

