

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

VIRTUAL CARE

CLINICAL VIRTUAL CARE WITH DR. ALEJANDRO DE MOLNÁR D'ÁRKOS MILLORETE



Dr. Alejandro de Molnár d'Árkos Millorete is one of Cigna's leading Medical Directors, responsible for the smooth running of the clinical teams of the Europe Global Segments structure (Global Individual Health, Global Employer Health, and International Organisations). We caught up with him to find out more about the virtual clinical care services on offer to Cigna members.

Alejandro, can you tell us a bit about the virtual care services your teams offer?

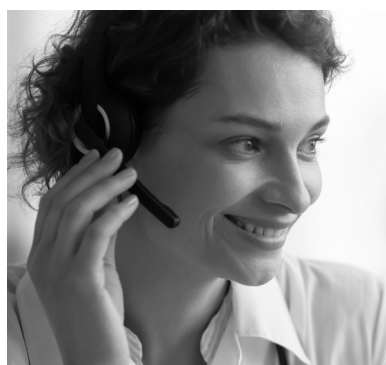
Our clinical team contributes to the health, wellbeing, and peace of mind of our customers through services such as clinical case management and chronic condition support. Everything we do is actually virtual care, because our doctors and nurses are not physically present when they interact with our customers. Everything is done virtually.

What does the clinical case management service comprise?

Case management is a service we offer where a clinician, normally a nurse, but sometimes a doctor, is appointed as a person of contact in Cigna, to help our customers handle their care. This is particularly beneficial for people suffering from conditions where the complexity or the sensitivity of the disease, or the difficulties of arranging care, makes them more vulnerable or means they need more support. Our case managers lead the overall healthcare journey.

And what does that entail?

Our mission is to ensure that our customers are getting the right treatment at the right time and in the right place. Our main goals fall into three main areas of action: facilitate access to care, provide guidance, and assist with logistics. It's not just from a healthcare point of view; we also help in getting the right pre-authorisation documents and guarantees of payment; liaising with providers; educating customers on their health; and ensuring the care they are receiving is appropriate.



We make sure that the treatment customers receive follows medical guidelines, is suited to their situation, and adds value to their overall condition management. Our case managers make often titanic efforts to coordinate all parties involved to make this happen. And they take the hands of our customers and guide them through their whole healthcare journey.

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As part of this journey, do you encourage members to better understand their own conditions?

Absolutely. Case management is also about empowering the customer through education so they can better manage their health themselves. We now work with a very powerful tool, Health Cloud, through which we can create personalised care plans and comprehensive treatment and recovery pathways. This helps us to anticipate customers' needs; to not only know that a member is having hip replacement surgery next month, but also that they'll be admitted to hospital for five days and that afterwards, they are expected to be discharged and should start physiotherapy. So then we can share with them their personalised care plan, complete

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with next steps and accompanying guidance, setting recovery and education goals to address with them, according to the gaps in care and knowledge identified through the process.

Are there any resources or reading materials that you send to customers to offer them information about their specific conditions?

Yes. Case managers work with a great resource that I feel personally very proud of. Our condition guides are comprehensive guidelines covering various aspects of different conditions, including definitions, preventative measures, diagnostic processes, and treatment techniques. Everything is explained in a very complete, easy-to-

understand, and practical way, covering not only relevant medical information, but also the day-to-day experiences of the condition.

These guides are sent to customers alongside their care plans and case management details. I'm pleased to say that this material has been extremely well received by customers and colleagues worldwide.

The last few months have been difficult for everyone, all over the world. How has Cigna supported its global customers during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Our telehealth offering has been very well received during the pandemic. I think it has added significant value over the last few months. It has been so difficult to seek care, so it's important that members have been able to count on such a reliable resource – and that it's generally available in their own language. As clinicians, we understand the importance of being able to discuss health and other sensitive concerns in your mother tongue.

How have your teams supported customers during the pandemic?

During the lockdown that the COVID-19 pandemic provoked, we have been there to support those who are following case management. We have enabled access to care, in a variety of scenarios, when they have been struggling to do simple things like get consultations or follow-up sessions with their treating doctors or obtain prescriptions. Think about patients undergoing



chemotherapy or other long-term treatments which might have been interrupted because of the situation; we have been by their side, to ensure their peace of mind, provide guidance, and facilitate continuity of care.

What do you see as coming next in the future of the clinical team and virtual care?

This pandemic has changed the overall perception and the approach to remote healthcare. People were unconvinced about the quality of virtual services; and some didn't believe that they could add any sort of value to the patient at all. In addition, slow development meant that remote services weren't an option as a universal resource offered to patients worldwide. But over recent months, we've seen that this service has helped customers to access the continuity of care that they needed during lockdown. I think we need to continue exploring this pathway to enhance our remote clinical proposition.

What role do you think Cigna can play in that development?

I think it is our duty to continue to explore how we can enhance our services, implement them to treat other conditions; and ultimately improve the lives of our customers. I think it is our mission to remain by their side, and simultaneously continue to evolve within the market. We need to put the patient at the heart of what we are doing and think, in addition to what we have, what other solutions could we offer?



We serve globally mobile individuals for whom telehealth consults are a great solution. Having your primary care physician in a remote setting means that whenever you want to speak to them, instead of making a physical appointment, you can do it remotely. And then you can ensure a correct follow-up, wherever you are in the world, with the same physician each time.

I think it would also be good to explore which other sorts of things would be acceptable and desirable for our customers suffering from chronic conditions; things like coaching services, dietary services, and emotional support. We'll see what we can come up with!

Written by: **Cigna Wellbeing**

With special thanks to:



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Together, all the way.®

