

December 2021

## Monthly Newsletter

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As the New Year approaches, we want to take a moment to share a recap of our year, but before we recap the past, we want to share a few future announcements.

Please note our office will be closed December 31 and January 3, and don't forget to mark your calendars for our first event of 2022:



**Webinar:**

# **Best Practices to Engage Employees in their Health**

*February 10, 2022*

Active participation in employees' personal health leads to increased workplace productivity and living a healthy life – at home and work.

[Dr. Jessica Grossmeier](#) will cover research on employer best practices to better engage employees in their health care and provide a tool employers can use to gauge their success.

Additionally, we'll host a panel of employers for a question-and-answer session to provide current, real-world examples of successfully engaging employees.

[Register Now](#)

Now that we've covered our future announcements, let's recap this past year!

## The Alliance Events



The Alliance hosted five virtual events due to another pandemic-laden year:

- [Health Policy Regulation for Employers](#): We invited Quarles & Brady's John Barlament to talk shop about the No Surprises Act and other provisions brought forth by the Consolidated Appropriations Act. John helped prepare a 2022 checklist for employers that [we highly recommend you revisit](#).
- [Fall Symposium & Annual Meeting – Payment Reform](#): Suzanne F. Delbanco, Ph.D., Executive Director from Catalyst for Payment Reform, helped us talk about how shifting payments away from fee-for-service to value-based alternatives gives employers more money in their pockets and consumers a better bill of health.
- [Spring Symposium & Annual Meeting – Digging Into Data](#): Dr. Marty Makary laid out health care's quality problems with surgical precision while expressing optimism for a future led by proactive employers and data-driven

doctors. We also hosted an esteemed consultant panel who explained how employers can leverage data to improve their health benefits strategies.

- [Employee Behavioral Health During a Pandemic](#): Employers learned how to foster a positive work environment en route to improving their employees' mental health. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Jerry Halverson, the Chief Medical Officer at Rogers Behavioral Health keynoted the event and provided great insight into the individual's mindset during this stressful time period.
- [COVID-19 Vaccination Management for Employers](#): We hosted a plethora of consultants who came together to address employer vaccination policies, how to communicate facts about the virus and vaccines, and the cultural nuances that go along with those policies.

[View Events Page](#)

## Our Top Blog Posts



### **2022 Employer Health Plan Requirements from The Consolidated Appropriations Act**

Employer health plans have new requirements due to provisions from The Consolidated Appropriations Act. The continual rise of health care costs have sparked the bi-partisan price transparency regulations for health care providers, third-party administrators, and...



[Read more](#)



### **New Employee Benefits Trends in 2021 Shaped by COVID-19**

Most employers have recognized the strain that the pandemic has placed on their employees and renewed their health benefits plans without significant changes to cost-sharing and network plan design. Efforts to improve delivery systems and networks to improve...



[Read more](#)



### **What Are The Benefits of Hosting a Vendor Summit?**

As you begin the new year, you're probably reassessing your benefit plan and vendor partners to help improve your employees' health and wellbeing.



[Read more](#)



### **Advanced Primary Care: The Solution to Primary Care's Problems**

Recently, one of our larger employer-members brought an issue to my attention that reminded me of the importance of proper primary care. This employer had a patient who required an ultrasound – which, if performed during an office visit, would be 100% covered by the plan.



[Read more](#)



### **New Federal Transparency Rules and Regulations for Plan Sponsors**

A lot has happened over the past two years in relation to price transparency; executive and Congressional actions have led to new federal rules and regulations for health systems, benefit administrators, and plan sponsors. These rules have promise to make public...



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## NEHA Members to Unite with The Alliance

In September, we announced that members of The Northcentral Employers Healthcare Alliance would unite under the umbrella of The Alliance. Many have joined us effective January 1st, while more are slated to join later in 2022.

[Learn More](#)

Overall, we've added more than 50 employers to The Alliance in 2021.

## Leading Legislators to Important Health Policy Decisions

Throughout the year, we brought employer-members to more than a dozen meetings with state senators, members of Congress, and the governor of Wisconsin.

We also worked with health policy experts, consultants, and cooperative partners to sign onto letters to your legislators including:

- Supported the proposed [Qualified Payment Amount](#) in August.
- Joined 63 other organizations in urging Congress to maintain vital consumer protections in the [No Surprises Act](#).

- Signed onto the [National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions' letter](#) asking legislators to protect health care consumers from surprise medical bills.
- [Submitted joint comments](#) with Common Ground to CMS illustrating the importance of price transparency in health care.

[Learn More](#)

## DeMars in Demand

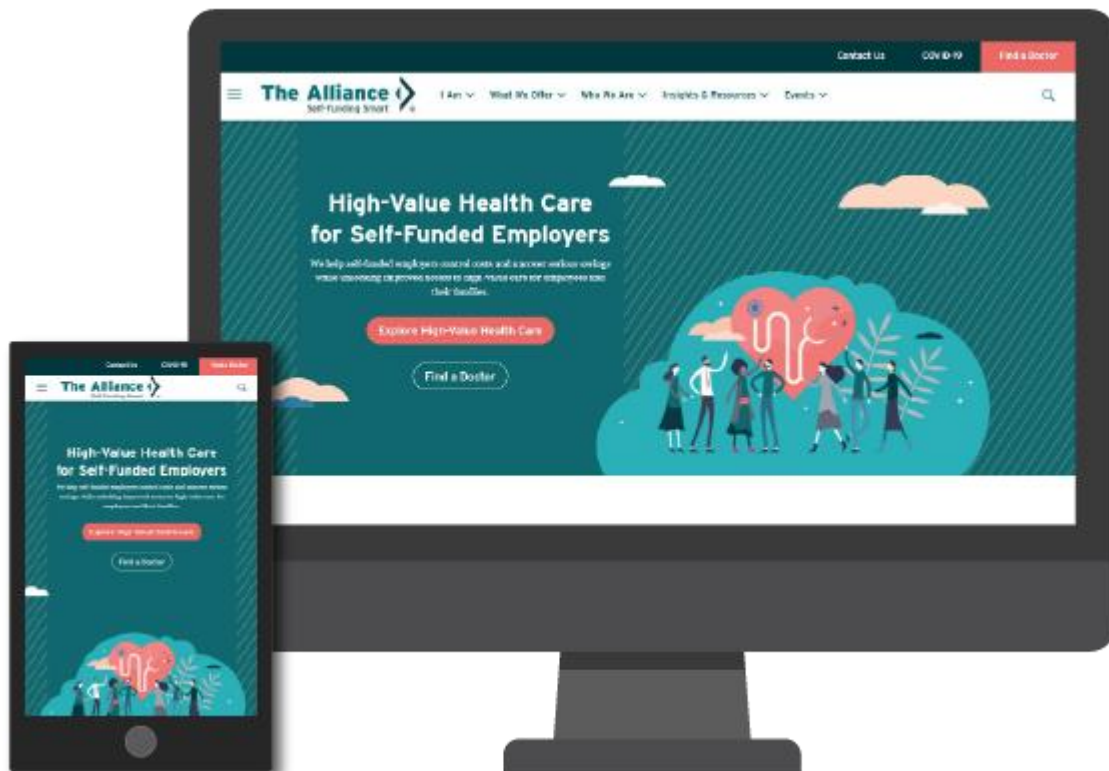
Our CEO, Cheryl DeMars, was in high demand this year. Most recently, she was interviewed by [Senators Tammy Baldwin and Mike Braun's offices for a news release](#).

Cheryl was also chosen to moderate a panel of experts on Payment Reform at the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions' [Annual Forum](#) in November.

Additionally, Cheryl was quoted throughout the year in several news articles including:

- Fortune magazine: [Employers must step up to control health care prices](#)
- BenefitsPRO: [Moving toward quality, affordable care: First-hand perspectives](#)
- Wall Street Journal: [U.S. proposes upping penalty for hospitals that don't publish prices](#)

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## New & Improved Website

As you probably know, we recently launched our new website, and the feedback we've gotten has been very positive so far!

If you can't find something you're looking for, there's a chance it's been moved to a different section of the website. If you have any trouble finding your way around the new site, email us at [csr@the-alliance.org](mailto:csr@the-alliance.org).

[View Site](#)

## Improved Provider Expansion

We contracted with 170 new provider groups this year, adding to the 32,000+ hospitals, clinics, and doctors in our network that we started with in 2021. Here's a few highlights:

- This summer, we added four HSHS hospitals to our network and more than 100 Prevea clinics (encompassing 900 doctors) across Eastern Wisconsin.



- In Illinois, we contracted new, lower rates with the University of Illinois Health System and added Morrison Community Hospital – a critical access hospital close to the Iowa border – to our network.

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## Price Transparency Showcases our Rates

Although the recent price transparency laws have met a lot of resistance, some hospitals are posting their price information online. We analyzed the information that's available and compared our rates to our competitors. From the data we were able to get our hands on, our rates meet or beat nearly everyone.

We are hoping that more price transparency progress is in the works for 2022. We'll certainly be pushing for it!

## Provider Updates

The following new providers have been added to **The Alliance Networks:**

### **Behavioral Health**

Lubin, Molly, MD - Madison, WI

### **Chiropractic**

Beyond Wellness Chiropractic - Savage, MN

Bradley Chiropractic & Physical Therapy - Wausau, WI

Gilge Chiropractic - Wausau, WI

River Valley Chiropractic - Onalaska, WI

Robin Center Chiropractic - Robbinsdale, MN

Shell Lake Cumberland Chiropractic - Cumberland, WI

### **Clinic**

New Frontiers Psychiatric & TMS - Milwaukee, WI

Rylatt, Julie, LCSW - Rockford, WI

### **Skilled Nursing Facility**

New Glarus Home - New Glarus, WI

Woodside Lutheran Home - Greenbay, WI

### **Vision**

Redman Gelinis Eye Care - Multiple Locations, WI

## How Are We Doing?

Answer one question to let us know!

How likely is it that you would recommend The Alliance to a friend or colleague?

Highly Unlikely

Highly Likely

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5510 Nobel Dr., Ste 200, Fitchburg, WI 53711