

Accordant[®]
A CVS Caremark Company



Nurses Impacting Care Everyday[®]
NICE

SNAPSHOTS

Accordant Health Services

Accordant provides the industry's **only proactive care management solution to empower individuals with rare chronic conditions.** Through specialized interventions and personalized care, we empower members to improve their clinical outcomes and quality of life, leading to significantly improved financial outcomes in the population. Since 1997, we have supported more than 420,000 members from more than 100 employers, health plans, and agencies. By applying proprietary algorithms to medical and pharmacy claims data, we successfully identify and engage members with the following conditions:

- ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis)
- CIDP (Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyradiculoneuropathy)
- Crohn's Disease
- Ulcerative Colitis
- CF (Cystic Fibrosis)
- Dermatomyositis
- Gaucher's Disease
- Hemophilia
- MS (Multiple Sclerosis)
- MG (Myasthenia Gravis)
- PD (Parkinson's Disease)
- Polymyositis
- RA (Rheumatoid Arthritis)
- Scleroderma
- Epilepsy (Seizure Disorders)
- SCD (Sickle Cell Disease)
- SLE or Lupus (Systemic Lupus Erythematosus)

Once eligible members are engaged, we **proactively provide education, motivation, and skill** they need in order to manage their complex health conditions and comorbidities. Results of program success are measured through numerous clinical and quality indicators and reduction in ER visits and hospitalizations. Our long-standing history of positive results demonstrates that members gain better control of their condition as it progresses, thus providing a **substantial annual cost savings to our clients.** For more information about the Accordant program and how your organization can benefit from our Care Management programs for 17 rare, chronic conditions, contact:

Accordant Health Services

1-800-948-2497

www.accordant.com

4900 Koger Boulevard Suite 100 Greensboro, NC 27407

Tracking Complex Health Needs

For one member with RA (rheumatoid arthritis), what started as a routine quarterly assessment quickly escalated to an opportunity for increased care coordination to ensure member safety and prompt medical evaluation. The

Accordant nurse contacted the member for an assessment, and the member mentioned they had planned to call Accordant later to ask about low blood pressure. This member had a past history of multiple cardiac stent placements and currently complained of dizziness as well as shoulder and neck pain. The Accordant nurse immediately asked the member to check their blood pressure. The member, who was home alone, did so and reported a **blood pressure reading of 81/50**.

Since the member was at home alone, the nurse began to work quickly to locate someone who could be with the member and ensure prompt evaluation at the emergency room. **She explained that an evaluation at the emergency**

It is important to ensure that members remain calm during a potential crisis to allow for effective listening and communication skills and to ensure appropriate follow-up.

room was necessary, adding

that the member was at risk for complications from low blood pressure, such as a fall with significant injury. Since the member's spouse was only a few minutes from the house, the Accordant nurse encouraged the member to call and ask the spouse to come home. The Accordant nurse stayed on the phone while

the member contacted the spouse. The Accordant nurse continued to talk with the member until the spouse arrived to ensure the member remained calm and was not in danger of fainting or falling. The member was then instructed to go to the emergency room immediately for evaluation and treatment. The Accordant nurse also contacted the member's PCP (primary care physician) after the call to advise that the member was en route to the emergency room.

The nurse called the member later to follow up and learned that **the member had received treatment at the emergency room for severe dehydration and had been admitted overnight for hydration and monitoring. At the time of the follow-up call, the member's blood pressure was around 110/70.** The member was thankful that the Accordant nurse had contacted the PCP, as the PCP had been able to meet the member at the hospital to assist with evaluation and management. The member was also very grateful for the timing of the phone call from the Accordant nurse. The prompt education and action by the Accordant nurse helped prevent what could have been a serious complication.

The Accordant program helps identify critical opportunities to improve member care through immediate medical attention. Accordant can provide supportive, proactive guidance to members during a time of crisis or rapidly changing health status. Prompt, effective interventions not only help members receive support at a time when it is most needed, but also ensure all appropriate measures are taken to prevent health complications or other adverse outcomes.

Care Coordination

Accordant has the unique ability to collaborate with members and payors to identify and reduce potential health risks or complications. We also empower members through education and support to proactively manage their health. It can be a challenge to manage a chronic illness, particularly when other comorbidities occur that also require treatment and support. We understand that good communication is essential to help members communicate with their health care team, especially during times when complex medical care is needed, and we can help guide members to ensure success with their treatment goals.

For one member with RA (rheumatoid arthritis), additional collaboration and support proved essential after a radical mastectomy with lymph node removal. This member had been identified by the health plan as high-risk and had been referred to the Accordant nurse for more intensive management. The goal at the initial call was to assess the member's current needs, identify any potential problems or complications, and assist the member in collaborating with the health care team during this critical period.

During the assessment, the member reported completing the prescribed sessions of physical therapy postoperatively, but having been unable to use the provided compression arm sleeve to reduce swelling. The member had been using heat to relieve these symptoms, and had been attempting to perform the physical therapy exercise at home as instructed after the initial two sessions.

The Accordant nurse encouraged the member to report these symptoms to the PCP (primary care physician) and discussed with the member the option for additional physical therapy if needed. The member preferred to try doing the exercises at home instead and had a follow-up appointment with the PCP in a few weeks. The member was given positive reinforcement for the determination to complete the physical therapy exercise and provided permission for the Accordant nurse to collaborate with the PCP regarding the upcoming appointment and the symptoms.

Improves Recovery

The Accordant nurse contacted the member's PCP and spoke with the office nurse. Together they discussed this member's postoperative progress. The PCP's nurse reported that the member had demonstrated increased range of motion at the last visit, but had not reported any symptoms of pain, stiffness, or swelling. Based on the information provided by Accordant, the nurse felt that the member should be seen sooner and moved up the next appointment. The PCP's nurse expressed sincere appreciation for this update on the member's progress.

The member saw the PCP the next day and an ultrasound was performed to rule out the presence of thrombosis. The member was prescribed several additional sessions of physical therapy and was given a prescription to assist with the discomfort and swelling. The Accordant nurse and the member then discussed the treatment plan to be followed until the next PCP appointment.

The member was very thankful for the collaboration and support of the Accordant nurse and acknowledged that without those interventions, they would still have pain and swelling, and would not have received additional physical therapy sessions or a modification to the treatment regimen. As a result of the support from the nurse, this member reduced the chance for complications and was on the path to recovery and improved wellness.



Proactive Education Improves Health

During a recent assessment, one member with dermatomyositis reported persistent symptoms of chronic lymphedema, despite prescribed use of compression treatment. The Accordant nurse reviewed the member's symptoms and recognized them as symptoms of possible cellulitis. Both

lymphedema and cellulitis can cause swelling of the limbs; however, cellulitis can quickly escalate resulting in a decline in skin integrity and associated infection, or even serious blood clots.

The Accordant nurse educated the member on the possibility of cellulitis and the importance of reporting the symptoms to the doctor for evaluation, diagnosis, and appropriate treatment. The member was urged to contact the doctor immediately. The nurse also scheduled a follow-up call with the member.

The member did see the doctor immediately and cellulitis was diagnosed and treated. The compression treatment was withheld due to the risks of compression in patients with acute cellulitis. The member received antibiotics to prevent skin breakdown or bacterial infections, and thereby avoid any complications or an exacerbation of dermatomyositis due to infection. The member said during the follow-up call that the

Accordant nurse was a *“lifesaver.”* The prompt education and follow up ensured this member was alerted to a significant health risk and received timely and effective treatment to prevent complications.

According to recently published reports, approximately 75 million people in the United States have two or more concurrent chronic health conditions, and roughly 65% of total health care spending in the United States is directed towards the management of these conditions.¹ Accordant nurses work to help individual members holistically manage their own care, addressing chronic illness and any comorbidities that could impact a member's wellness. This allows for proactive management, more efficient health care utilization, and a reduction in health care spending.



¹Parekh A, Barton M. The Challenge of Multiple Comorbidity for the US Health Care System. JAMA. 2010;303(13):1303-1304.

Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Habits

For one newly diagnosed member with Crohn's disease, the support and education from the Accordant nurse provided the reassurance and motivation needed to be proactive in establishing a good healthy lifestyle to support the Crohn's treatment plan. The member had been diagnosed with Crohn's less than two years ago and had developed a rapport with the Accordant nurse. Together they had discussed the signs and symptoms of Crohn's and what to expect. The member had been excited to receive the *CareConnections*SM newsletters and other mailed materials, which provided additional education between assessments with the Accordant nurse.

During a recent assessment, the member told the Accordant nurse about having nausea and vomiting and asked for support or information on how to ease those symptoms. The Accordant nurse provided verbal education to the member on the signs of a flare and encouraged the member to talk with the doctor about the symptoms and whether a low oxalate diet could help. Together the member and the Accordant nurse discussed oxalates and the foods that contain them, as well as the ways this member could monitor food and make small dietary changes to avoid foods known to contain oxalates. **The Accordant nurse suggested avoiding alcohol and caffeine, which can also irritate the stomach and contribute to the underlying symptoms of Crohn's. The member was also encouraged to discuss these things with the doctor before making any changes.** The Accordant nurse also reviewed with this member the signs and symptoms of dehydration and intestinal blockage and encouraged the member to be vigilant in calling the doctor at any sign of a problem. After the assessment, the Accordant nurse also mailed written education on the signs and symptoms of a Crohn's flare and how to manage them effectively.

It is important for members to understand how to effectively manage the signs and symptoms of a flare and to take proactive steps to lower the chance for a flare. A Crohn's flare could create complications for the member, as well as increase health care costs and lead to poor health outcomes. For this member, a few simple steps could significantly increase well-being and reduce the likelihood of a flare.

During the follow-up phone call, the member reported talking with the gastroenterologist about a low oxalate diet. The gastroenterologist agreed that this was a good diet plan for the member to follow. The member has stopped drinking soda and is drinking more flavored water, along with keeping a careful food diary to track the foods that cause nausea or vomiting. The member said they felt much better since receiving the education from the Accordant nurse and speaking with the gastroenterologist. The nausea and vomiting had decreased and the member felt confident in the ability to be proactive in tracking the foods that could be problematic. The member mentioned that this would not have been possible without the support and education from the Accordant nurse, which had helped significantly in coping with the new diagnosis of Crohn's.

Case Management services are an important aspect of the Accordant Care Management Program. Not only do these services significantly impact member health outcomes and boost member satisfaction, the care coordination inherent in case management support can prove a very valuable tool for ensuring effective collaboration and satisfaction among the providers involved in a member's care. Accordant nurses can work to resolve complex issues that often arise when multiple providers and vendors are involved in a member's care.

Recently a member with RA (rheumatoid arthritis) revealed during a discharge follow-up phone call that needed therapy had not yet been started because of a delay in approval by the health plan. The member had recently undergone two emergency surgeries for compartment syndrome and required occupational therapy to improve movement and feeling in the right hand. While the physician had ordered this, it had been over one week since the surgery and the member had been working with the home health agency, the physician, and the therapy provider to resolve the issue with no success. The therapy provider had told the member and the home health agency that the services were not covered by the member's health plan. During the call with the Accordant nurse, the member requested assistance to resolve this issue and expressed concern over a possible setback in recovery due to the delay in receiving therapy.

The Accordant nurse recognized that this was an urgent issue. For many members, timely therapy can be an important aspect of recovery and wellness, but often members are unable to resolve issues with authorizations and health plan approvals – and even more frequently the cause for the delay is simple and easy to correct with some investigation.

- The Accordant nurse started by contacting the health plan to confirm the member's coverage for physical therapy.
- A call was placed to the home health agency, who had been handling the contact with the physical therapy provider. The Accordant nurse relayed the conversation with the health plan and discussed the member's case. The home health agency explained that the initial order had been written for the member to receive in-home occupational therapy support; however, it was determined that the services the member required could not be done at home. Therefore, the member had only been evaluated and still needed to go to physical therapy. During the call with the member, the Accordant nurse confirmed the member's understanding of this and the member reported being willing to go in to receive therapy services.

ed Health Outcomes

- The Accordant nurse contacted the referral coordinator for the occupational therapy provider to discuss the steps for obtaining authorization for this member. During the course of the call, it was discovered that the referral coordinator had been requesting authorizations for in-home visits, though the member was not approved (and did not want) in-home visits. The Accordant nurse provided the referral coordinator with the correct information, as well as the number for the health plan and requested that the request for authorization be resubmitted.
- The Accordant nurse also contacted the member's referring physician to provide an update on the delay in receiving therapy and assurance that the correct information had been distributed to both the home health agency and the occupational therapy provider. The physician's staff was extremely pleased with the care coordination provided by the Accordant nurse on the member's behalf.

It was critical that this member begin occupational therapy as soon as possible to recover use of the right hand and wrist and promote healing following surgery. This would also help ensure that the member did not experience any complications following surgery. A follow-up call was scheduled with the member to ensure that therapy started without any further delay, and the Accordant nurse requested that the referral coordinator call back to confirm once authorization for services had been obtained. This care coordination involved multiple phone calls and follow-ups with the providers involved with this member's care, but ultimately resulted in the timely provision of services that were vital to this member's healing and follow-up care.

During the follow-up call, the member confirmed having started occupational therapy and said, "My physician was so pleased and very appreciative of all your hard work to help me get therapy and they said they have never worked with a friendlier person from the health plan." The Accordant nurse was well aware that sometimes additional communication and collaboration is needed when multiple providers are involved in member care. Things can easily be overlooked or communicated incorrectly without someone to provide care coordination and ensure seamless provision of services. That is our strength; each day we work exceptionally hard to ensure that members have the needed resources and support to effectively manage their care and live well. For this member, the care coordination directly improved the member's health outcomes, increased effective utilization of services, and prevented complications or the need for hospitalization or additional trips to the physician or the emergency room.



Reducing Hospital Admissions

A complex illness like MS (multiple sclerosis) can require multiple interventions and care coordination to ensure positive health outcomes for members. One member had longstanding difficulty with bladder and bowel function as a result of MS and had recently been hospitalized for placement of a colostomy to aid with bowel functioning. The discharge follow-up call from Accordant was especially critical to identify potential problems.

Follow-up care after discharge is critical to educate members on the signs of complications. This early intervention plays a key role in reducing readmissions.

During the discharge call, the member reported that since being discharged from the hospital, no stool had passed through the colostomy. The member also confirmed that while hospitalized, the colostomy had collected stool. The member had been home for three days and had received one visit from the home health nurse to change the colostomy bag, which was empty. The Accordant nurse asked several questions pertaining to the colostomy and bowel functioning. The member reported being unable to pass gas and also had abdominal pressure and discomfort. The member had not reported these issues to the surgeon.

The Accordant nurse provided verbal education to the member on the importance of reporting potential problems quickly. And the member was specifically encouraged to notify the doctor for any health changes. The Accordant nurse also educated the member on the potential contribution of narcotic pain relievers to constipation. The nurse contacted the home health agency to report this potential issue for the member and request a follow-up evaluation. The home health agency was thankful to receive this information on the member's condition. They immediately called the member and scheduled a home health visit to assess the member's constipation and follow-up with the member's surgeon as appropriate. The Accordant nurse scheduled a follow up call with the member to ensure resolution of the symptoms and address any other questions for this member.

The member subsequently reported that no bowel sounds were detected during the home health visit. So the home health nurse contacted the member's surgeon, who prescribed laxative treatments to ease constipation and improve the colostomy function.

During the follow-up call with the Accordant nurse, the member reported having taken the laxatives as prescribed and confirmed that the colostomy had again begun to collect stool. The member's abdominal pressure and discomfort had also resolved and the member was very thankful for the support from the Accordant nurse, which enabled quick follow-up with the member's health care team to resolve this problem. The education provided by the nurse also helped the member identify when the surgeon should be contacted and also potentially prevented complications that could have resulted in poor health outcomes or even an ER visit and hospital readmission.

Education About the Flu

While talking to one program member, who has RA (rheumatoid arthritis), an Accordant nurse identified an opportunity for education about the effectiveness of the flu vaccine in relation to other medications this member was taking. The member was on antibiotics for a cold and did not know if it would be appropriate to get the flu vaccine this year. Also, the member had questions about what virus strains were covered by this vaccine. **Flu shots are particularly important for members with RA to reduce the potential for flu-related complications, such as pneumonia. When the immune system is suppressed due to disease and medication, complications are more likely to occur and may be more severe than they are in otherwise healthy adults. In addition, active influenza symptoms in these members may be more prolonged and severe.**¹ Accordant recommends the flu shot for all members with RA to improve the opportunity for wellness during the flu season.

The Accordant nurse commended the member for calling to ask about getting the flu shot and discussed with the member the effects of biologic medications on the immune system, and the importance of a flu shot to prevent complications. In general, it is safe to receive a flu shot as long as fever is not present. However, **the nurse encouraged the member to speak with the rheumatologist, who could evaluate the cough and advise appropriately. The nurse also encouraged the member to talk to the rheumatologist about getting a pneumonia vaccine,** which could offer further protection for the member. Both of these important vaccines could reduce the potential for complications or hospitalization as a result of the flu.

At the end of the call, the member thanked the nurse for the information, saying, *“Every time I talk to you I learn so much.”*

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Seasonal Flu Information for Rheumatology Professionals. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; December 2012. <http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/rheum-flu.htm>. Accessed January 20, 2014.



Care Coordination Reduces Risk

One member with RA (rheumatoid arthritis) was recently referred by the health plan for medication reconciliation following an inpatient admission for congestive heart failure, respiratory failure, and pneumonia. During the call with the Accordant nurse, the member reported shortness of breath and mentioned there had been a change in one of the medications, digoxin. The Accordant nurse contacted the member's PCP (primary care physician) to investigate.

During the call with the member's PCP, the Accordant nurse learned that the member was supposed to have additional labs drawn to monitor digoxin levels, but had not.

Careful monitoring of digoxin is essential to ensure that it is working properly and to avoid toxicity. The PCP nurse transferred the Accordant nurse to the member's cardiologist for follow up. The cardiologist's office confirmed that the member had an upcoming appointment scheduled for labs, but a digoxin level had not been ordered at that time, even though the member had missed the appointment that had been scheduled three weeks earlier. **The cardiologist's nurse agreed to contact the member to discuss the digoxin, the shortness of breath, and lab work that the member may need.**

The Accordant nurse contacted the member again shortly after the initial conversation with the cardiologist's office. The member had restarted the digoxin, but could not recall the date it was restarted or the current dose. They did confirm that lab testing had been scheduled for the next day. The member said they were not feeling well and requested that the Accordant nurse call back the following week. The Accordant nurse relayed this information to the cardiologist's office and asked the nurse to review the dosage of digoxin and follow up with the member again.

During the next week, **the Accordant nurse contacted the member, who reported feeling much better. The member had been taking the digoxin as ordered and had attended the cardiology appointment to have labs drawn.** The member's shortness of breath had also improved. The Accordant nurse was able to report this successful health outcome back to the health plan case manager. The care coordination by the Accordant nurse between the member and the health care team helped the member be compliant with the treatment plan, including obtaining necessary laboratory testing, which improved the member's quality of life.

Medication compliance can be especially challenging for many members after a hospital admission, particularly if new medications were added or existing medications were changed. Accordant understands the importance of medication review following hospitalization to ensure that members are remaining compliant with treatment to minimize the risk for readmission or other complications.

Supporting a New Diagnosis

For one member recently diagnosed with MG (myasthenia gravis), the holistic support by the Accordant nurse proved essential for condition management. During a recent assessment, the member reported the onset of progressive tingling and a painful sensation in the rib cage, back, wrists, and fingers. At that time, the member's neurologist was out of the country and the PCP (primary care physician) had evaluated and determined the symptoms could have been brought on by a drug reaction to zoledronic acid, which the member had received two weeks earlier. The PCP had administered a steroid injection in the office. The member also reported some increased swallowing difficulty during this call with the nurse.

The Accordant nurse provided verbal education to the member on the benefits of the steroid injection to ease the signs of MG, assuring the member that it could provide rapid pain relief and prevent symptoms from getting worse. The member was encouraged to call the PCP and report any changes in the signs or symptoms of MG. The member was also encouraged to contact the neurologist as soon as possible to report the pain and tingling as well as increased difficulty with swallowing. The nurse mailed a brochure on MG and swallowing and scheduled a follow-up call.

During the follow-up call, the member confirmed having spoken with the neurologist. The member's neurologist had revised the treatment plan to include corticosteroids to help the member be more comfortable. The pain and tingling had resolved, and the member had a swallowing evaluation scheduled in a few weeks. The member expressed sincere appreciation for the support from the Accordant nurse saying, *"This is all new to me. You have experience that I don't and it helps to have someone to talk to about it."*

Accordant's comprehensive Care Management Program focuses on a holistic approach to helping members live well. It involves much more than just management of long-term chronic illness: It centers around expert clinicians providing education, resources, and guidance to address many facets of a member's life that may significantly impact their health and well-being. This can be especially reassuring for newly-diagnosed members during a time when they may still be struggling to find a balance with their disease. The goal is to assist members toward living an active, healthy life while having the tools and resources necessary to proactively manage their illness and improve health outcomes.

Enhanced Communication Channels

For one member with PD (Parkinson's disease), recent secure email communications with the Accordant nurse resulted in valuable education and guidance that helped this member remain active and enjoy a positive quality of life. **In a recent email, the member noted that when exercising on the treadmill each morning, there had been an increase in leg and toe cramps and toe curling. The member had tried several things to relieve the cramps, including slowing down activity, stretching, and massage.** The member decided to email the Accordant nurse for additional support.

The Accordant nurse provided education to the member on the complication of dystonia that can occur with PD, as well as the etiology of this problem. Dystonia can often happen when PD medication begins to wear off in the early morning or late evening. The Accordant nurse suggested that the member speak with the neurologist about this, while reassuring the member that this may happen as the result of medication timing or dose, or timing of exercise in relation to the medication dose.

Shortly after this conversation, the Accordant nurse received a follow-up email from the member confirming an adjustment to the exercise schedule, which had provided significant improvement in the member's symptoms. This simple and quick conversation with the member provided an opportunity to provide education on possible complications with PD and practical tips that could help improve quality of life. Email communication helped this member to quickly and easily reach the Accordant nurse with a question and develop a practical solution to enhance wellness.

One of the most effective ways to reach members and make a valuable impact on their ability to maintain their health is to meet them at a place in their health care continuum that works for them. Many members with a chronic illness have multiple providers and caregivers on their health care team, which can make communication difficult. Accordant offers a variety of ways for members to connect with their nurse easily, in a way that's convenient for them. Many members use secure email and their secure member portal as a simple and effective way to communicate and get quick access to their Accordant nurse at the time when it's most needed. Online communication offers a tangible and convenient way for members and nurses to actively collaborate to improve care.



Proactive Member Management[®]

Providing support *before* it's needed.

Proactive Member Management (PMM) supports member and customer outcomes by organizing claims information to consistently and immediately facilitate critical intervention. PMM is designed to provide:

- Earlier identification of needs for program intervention through medical & pharmacy claims data reporting
- An internal claims-based information source for clinical staff to improve communication with members and provide opportunity for additional outreach
- Tracking of high cost or critical members that promotes positive effect on annual outcomes by increasing interventions to reduce avoidable admissions

Talk to us today to learn more about how members benefit from Proactive Member Management.



Accordant[®]

A CVS Caremark Company



4900 KOGER BOULEVARD / SUITE 100
GREENSBORO, NC 27407

*Copyright © 2014 Accordant Health Services LLC, a CVS Caremark company. All rights reserved.
Accordant is a wholly owned subsidiary of CVS Caremark. Additional information regarding financial ownership is available upon request.*

NICE[®] Snapshots content is proprietary, confidential information and may not be distributed to any third party without written permission from Accordant Health Services LLC, a CVS Caremark company. This publication may talk about medicines, products or services offered by other companies that are not part of Accordant's services. Accordant does not receive payment from or endorse companies offering these services. This publication should not be used, and is not intended, to prescribe treatment, or replace medical advice. This publication may contain prescription brand name drugs that are registered or trademarks of pharmaceutical manufacturers that are not affiliated with Accordant. Please email editor@accordant.net for comments or inquiries about this publication.