

# Genetic testing case study

How Harvard Pilgrim Health Care succeeded in harnessing the genomic revolution with the genetic testing solution from Carelon Medical Benefits Management.

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care provides health benefits to over three million members. With precision medicine capturing national media attention and claims for genetic testing increasing rapidly, the plan leadership knew it needed to implement a comprehensive approach to address this trend and ensure effective, evidence-based care for its members.

## The challenge

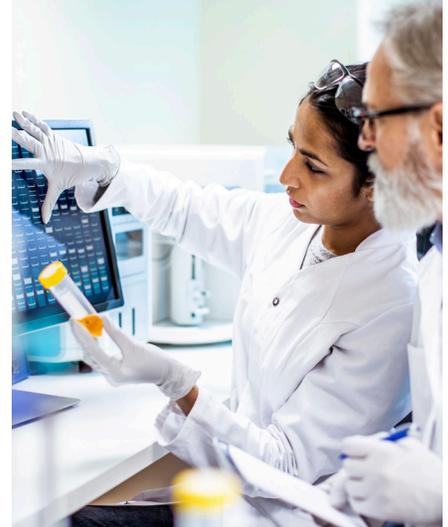
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care saw a surge in costs due to marked growth in genetic testing ordered for its members: year-over-year spending increased by 40 to 50 percent across its commercial groups.

What was driving the increase? Several factors contributed, including the practice of genetic testing laboratories launching dozens of new tests each month, like large, multi-gene panels with questionable clinical utility. Network providers ordering these tests often had limited training in clinical genetics, sometimes even relying on labs for guidance on which tests to order. Because of this, members frequently received results of unknown clinical significance, which may have been confusing or hard to interpret.

## The solution

Harvard Pilgrim leadership wanted to ensure that its members receive the right care and the timely guidance they need — without exposing them to the expense and uncertainty associated with unwarranted testing. They chose the genetic testing solution from Carelon Medical Benefits Management (Carelon), because of its unique approach and proven success in other markets across the US.

“The plan was experiencing a trend we’ve seen nationally — from family physicians to academic specialists, providers continue to order more genetic tests than ever before, even when studies have shown that about a third of these may be inappropriate,” said Michael Fisch, National Medical Director of Medical Oncology Programs and Genetics at Carelon. “Meanwhile, consumers are often left without the guidance they need to decide what their test results mean — or whether they should have them at all.”



Our solution offers access to genetics expertise and an automated clinical review to simplify providers' decision-making

Overall provider satisfaction

94%

10 months post-launch



Our solution enhances the member experience by increasing access to genetic counseling and helping members make informed decisions about testing options.

Harvard Pilgrim also saw value in bolstering its internal capabilities to address the complexity of genetic testing.

However, the company determined it would be impractical to manage this highly specialized and rapidly changing field in-house. Instead, Harvard Pilgrim looked to Carelon to provide our molecular genetics expertise needed to stay ahead of emerging trends, optimize lab relationships, and educate providers.

Our genetic testing solution was the ideal fit for this quality-driven organization because it combines genetics expertise with the proven effectiveness and scalability of the Carelon clinical review platform. To maximize effectiveness, Harvard Pilgrim tailored the solution to include the following capabilities:

- Robust, evidence-based clinical guidelines
- Clinical appropriateness review of all genetic tests on the market
- Genetic counseling for tests when it is standard of care
- Direction of testing to in-network laboratories
- Guidance to the right tests with clear clinical utility
- Timely and responsive clinical consultation for providers

#### The result

The genetic testing solution quickly proved effective at meeting Harvard Pilgrim's goals. PMPM spending on genetic testing decreased by 48 to 50 percent across its commercial groups, and utilization of out-of-network labs dropped by over 50 percent during the program's first year. Members also benefited from out-of-pocket savings, better care, and access to board-certified genetic experts by phone. Providers gained access to a highly automated and efficient clinical review process in addition to receiving responsive support from a team of genetics experts. Ten months after program launch, overall provider satisfaction with the program was an impressive 94 percent.

↓ 48%

Decrease in PMPM spending on genetic testing

↓ 50%

Decrease in utilization of out-of-network labs

The genetic testing solution from Carelon Medical Benefits Management supports appropriate, affordable genetic testing services across all medical specialties and subspecialties.

Learn more at [carelon.com](https://www.carelon.com)

