



Medicaid e-News

IA Health Link Success Story:

UnitedHealthcare Goes 'Above and Beyond' for the Special Olympics Iowa Community



UnitedHealthcare (UHC) was named "Outstanding Corporate Partner of the Year" by Special Olympics Iowa for its financial and volunteer support of nearly 15,000 athletes in their quest for better health.

UHC's strong history with Special Olympics Iowa began as a Gold Level Sponsor before becoming a Premier Statewide Partner in 2016. Through its Statewide Partner opportunity, UHC contributed to: Special Olympics Iowa competitions, including: bowling, equestrian, flag football, Mid-Winter Tournament, softball, Summer Games, volleyball, and Winter Games.

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"UHC has continued to go above and beyond for the Special Olympics Iowa community by continuing to create ways to educate Special Olympics Iowa athletes about health and wellness. UHC employees love to come out and volunteer and support our athletes and the athletes love being able to interact with them and are eager to continue their health education. UHC volunteers' support goes beyond cheering our athletes on in competition," stated John Kliegl, President and CEO, Special Olympics Iowa.

Additionally, UHC offered Special Olympic athletes with hearing screenings and education about nutrition, safety and fitness to create an overall healthy lifestyle as part of its Healthy Athlete Initiative. This initiative also included:

- **Special Smiles:** Offered athletes oral screening, oral health education, personal preventative products, free giveaways and information concerning necessary follow-up care by community-based dentists and educational institutions;
- **Opening Eyes:** Athletes received extensive vision and eye tests, refraction's for those requiring further screening, prescription glasses (free to the athletes), prescription protective sports eye wear (free to the athletes), free giveaways and referral advice for follow-up care;
- **FUNfitness:** The purposes of Special Olympics FUNfitness are to assess and improve flexibility, strength and balance; to educate athletes, coaches, families and caregivers about the importance of flexibility, strength and balance; and to provide a hands-on opportunity for Special Olympics athletes to learn about physical therapy;
- **Fit Feet:** Volunteer health care professionals screen athletes feet and ankles for deformities as well as check for infections, nail care and proper shoes and socks;
- **Health Promotions:** Offered athletes tips on nutrition, adequate hydration, maintaining personal hygiene, safety, fitness, danger of tobacco use, sun safety and other health concerns;
- **Healthy Hearing:** Provided hearing examinations and follow-up recommendations;
- **Medfests:** Opportunity to receive free Special Olympics Iowa athlete physicals.
- **Challenge Day Program:** Unique to Iowa, Challenge Days are a one-day event designed



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specifically for the severe and profound population of Iowa as well as our aging population. Because of the need to offer more activities for these individuals, it has been a goal of Special Olympics Iowa to expand on our motor skills programs. Challenge Days introduce team sports adapted for the severe and profound as well as those who are unable to participate in the traditional Special Olympics programs. Activities, such as ramp bowling, balloon volleyball, team basketball, basketball shoot, batting, ball darts, golf, shot put, race walk, and wall pass are modified to allow youth and adults to participate in a team or as an individual. Volunteers and switch activated equipment are on site to assist the athletes as they participate in each event.

As part of its work with Special Olympics Iowa, UHC also partnered with Iowa State University to honor an "Athlete of the Game" at 10 men's college basketball games, where a Special Olympics' athlete is recognized on the floor at Hilton Coliseum and presented with an autographed basketball. After the basketball season, all Athlete of the Game honorees were invited to a luncheon where they got to meet UHC employees. ISU Men's Basketball coach Steve Prohm also spoke and met with athletes at the luncheon.

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