

## Freespira: Virtual care partnership provides mental health care for managed Medicaid members



### Profile | Freespira

- Prescription digital therapeutics with 1:1 telehealth training and coaching throughout the 28-day treatment
- FDA-cleared system for treating panic disorder, panic attacks, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms by addressing dysfunctional breathing arising from carbon dioxide hypersensitivity.

### Scenario

According to the World Health Organization, panic disorder and PTSD are the No. 1 and 2 causes of “days out of role” in high-income nations. This term means the inability to work or carry out everyday activities. People with panic disorder average 45.6 days out of role per year, compared to 31.5 days for cancer patients and 32.3 days for those with migraine headaches. While psychotherapy can help some patients, the long duration (~12 weeks is recommended) and costs of treatment can be significant obstacles, especially for disadvantaged populations.

The Children’s Community Health Plan (CCHP) of Wisconsin has many individuals with under-managed or untreated panic disorder, panic attacks, and PTSD in their managed Medicaid health plan. These individuals are often high utilizers of care — notably emergency department visits and specialty care (most commonly cardiology) — as they seek relief from multiple providers for their complex and acute symptoms. Freespira partnered with CCHP in an initiative to provide an FDA (510k) cleared, accessible, and effective treatment for their members who suffer from diagnosed as well as undiagnosed panic attacks.



### Intake and Onboarding

Patients were identified and offered a referral for care via various routes:

- General membership: CCHP provides co-branded awareness and education to all members through direct mail, phone, and email.
- Currently diagnosed members: Freespira mines claims data provided by CCHP to identify individuals with a diagnosis of panic disorder or PTSD and then sends co-branded awareness and education pieces via email, SMS, direct mail, and phone.
- Undiagnosed candidates: Freespira developed an algorithm to analyze patterns of diagnoses and medical utilization in claims data suggestive of potential candidates for treatment before sending co-branded awareness and education pieces by email, SMS, direct mail, and phone.

For patients identified via claims and contacted directly, Freespira has a network of clinicians (mostly psych nurses and licensed professional counselors) who screen the patient, confirm suitability for the therapy, and then authorize the prescription. Patients enrolled in the program and authorized by a licensed clinician receive equipment, including a sensor device and dedicated tablet pre-loaded with the Freespira App via FedEx. Patients are then trained on using the equipment via a Zoom meeting with a coach and complete the twice-daily treatment for 28 days, including initial and weekly symptom severity checklists. Throughout treatment, the Freespira coaches monitor individual patient adherence via a dashboard to avoid problems that compromise optimizing patient experience, retention, and treatment efficacy.

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### Program Outcomes

Within the first year of implementation, CCHP has observed a reduction in symptoms and healthcare costs for patients treated with Freespira. This validates that their members, consistent with other populations, are receiving clinical benefits and using fewer healthcare services related to their symptoms.

A previous [academic trial](#) demonstrated that 68% of participants completing the program were in remission one year after treatment, and 91% had symptoms significantly reduced. Overall, medical costs declined by 35%, pharmaceutical costs fell by 68%, and emergency department costs fell by 65% for the year after treatment.

“When Freespira approached us with a treatment for panic disorder and PTSD, we looked deeply into our data. The prevalence of both conditions was startling; the number of members diagnosed with these conditions, as well as costs and utilization patterns, surprised us. We recognized these members needed an alternative treatment that we had not offered in the past.”

- Mark Rakowski, Chief Operating Officer, Children’s Community Health Plan

“Freespira's data analytic capabilities make it possible for us to share adherence, outcome, and cost data with CCHP, allowing us to effectively manage our partnership and benefit both the plan and members.”

- Monica Frederick, Senior Vice President, Strategic Accounts, Freespira, Inc.

## TAKEAWAYS FOR EFFECTIVE CARE TRANSITIONS

### Partnering to Foster Awareness and Trust



The payor and V1C partners' commitment to frequent engagement in reviewing population-level dashboards enables continuous program improvement and adaptation of clinical implementation strategies. Key metrics include clinical outcomes, health services utilization trends, and patient engagement.

Claim and contact data sharing between payors and V1C partners enables targeted outreach and enrollment through patient screening and identifying high-risk patients and potential gaps in care.



### Clinical Integration

Clinical outcomes are shared at the end of treatment with referring clinicians.

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### Bi-Directional Communication

Highly trained coaches armed with real-time patient data, including physiological data, are best able to engage patients with personal and specific coaching and a direct layer of accountability to help patients stay in the program and realize progress.



### Incentive Alignment

Freespira provides its customers—including commercial and managed Medicaid health plans, large self-insured employers, and the Veterans Administration—with a solution bundle. This bundle includes hardware, software, and services through a case-rate medical benefit that covers the 28-day regimen.



Visit the [V1C Care Transitions Toolkit](#) or view additional [V1C Care Transitions Case Studies](#).