

Uber Health hopes employers will cover the costs of workers' medical transportation

Article

The news: Uber Health is expanding into the employer market. The ride-hailing app's self-insured employer customers will start to cover trips to the doctor's office for their workers.

Uber Health announced the move at last week's HLTH conference, per Fierce Healthcare.

How we got here: Uber Health partners with providers, insurers, and other healthcare stakeholders to book non-emergency medical transportation for patients and provide rides for caregivers.

- For example, Uber Health recently teamed up with **CVS Health** to give consumers in underserved communities free rides to medical appointments.
- It also works with home health providers to give rides for home-based care staff to patients' homes.
- Uber Health is also a covered benefit in some Medicare Advantage and Medicaid plans. Members can get free transportation to physician appointments.

Uber Health turns to employers next: Self-insured employers pay for their workers' healthcare costs. That means they'll want to ensure their employees make it to medical appointments so their conditions don't progress and become more expensive down the road.

- Nearly **6 million Americans** delay medical appointments due to lack of transportation, per a 2020 study published in the National Library of Medicine.
- **For every dollar employers spend on healthcare benefits, another 61 cents is spent on lost productivity** due to illness- and injury-related absences, according to a 2020 study from the Integrated Benefits Institute.
- Lost production totals up to cost employers **\$575 billion per year**.

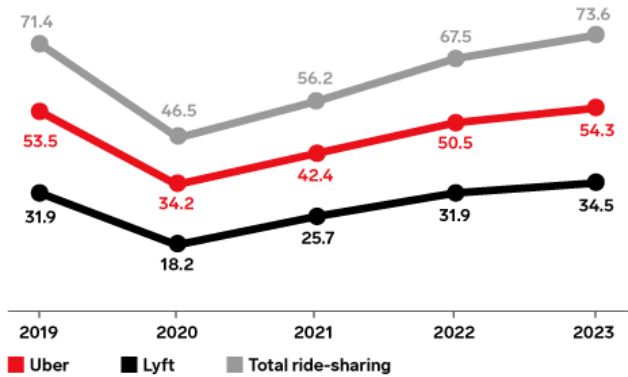
The opportunity: Uber and its chief competitor **Lyft (via Lyft Healthcare)** launched business units based on the impression that healthcare organizations see the value in covering rides for their patients and members. That's a sensible bet, considering patient no-shows cost the healthcare system around **\$150 billion annually** due to last-minute vacancies being created.

The challenge: We don't expect ride-hailers like Uber and Lyft to be the cure-all for missed medical appointments for two key reasons:

1. **The data doesn't yet show that free transportation = fewer missed visits.** There was no discernible difference in primary care visit no-show rates between Medicaid members who were offered complimentary Lyft rides (36.5%) to the clinic and those who weren't (36.7%), one 2018 study found.

2. Patients who need medical transportation support are the least likely to use Uber or Lyft. Lower-income consumers—the population who is most likely to skip out on medical care—[use ride-hailing services](#) less frequently than higher earners. This makes sense considering the cost associated. But that creates a barrier for Uber Health and Lyft Healthcare since these patients aren't likely to be comfortable or familiar with the apps in the first place.

US Adult Ride Share Users, by Service, 2019-2023
millions



Note: individuals ages 18+ who have used their account for an online transportation service such as Uber or Lyft at least once during the calendar year; excludes Uber Eats
Source: eMarketer, Aug 2021

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