

CVS, Uber team up to address a major barrier in healthcare: transportation

Article

The news: CVS Health announced a collaboration with Uber Health to provide patients in underserved areas with free rides to medical care, work, or education, per a CVS Health press

release.

- The partnership is a part of **Health Zones**, CVS Health's new initiative to boost health equity in high-risk communities in cities like Atlanta, Fresno, and Columbus.

Trendspotting: Ride-hailing rivals **Uber** and **Lyft** have elbowed further into healthcare over the past two years by partnering with deeply entrenched healthcare players.

- For example, last April, Uber and **Walgreens** teamed up to launch a nationwide COVID-19 vaccine appointment and no-cost ride scheduler through the Uber app.
- And in December 2020, Lyft **tied up** with EHR giant **Epic** on a similar vaccine initiative. Lyft's goal was to provide **60 million rides to and from vaccine sites** for individuals from low-income, uninsured, or at-risk communities.

Uber and Lyft are tapping into a major opportunity, considering transportation is a social determinant healthcare players are interested in tackling.

- **About 49% of payers and 41% of providers** said transportation access was a social determinant they captured in 2020 alone, **per** Change Healthcare.
- And it appears healthcare execs' interest in SDOH is only climbing: **About 59% of leaders are already incorporating SDOH** in their care management work, and **nearly 20% are planning to do so this year**, **according to** HCI Innovation's recent survey of 100 senior patient care organizations.

What's next? CVS' partnership with Uber will likely fit neatly into its overall health strategy for two key reasons:

1. By offering free rides to CVS locations, CVS can attract more people to its medical care services like vaccine appointments, while increasing foot traffic in CVS Health stores.

- About 30% of the US population and more than 54% of adults 65+ have received a COVID-19 booster shot.
- This number could ramp up, especially since the CDC just released data about the effectiveness of the booster vaccine against the omicron variant: A third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna shots was 90% effective against preventing hospitalization and 82% effective in preventing visits to the ED, **according to** the CDC.

- With more people scheduling vaccine appointments at CVS, it'll provide a ton of exposure for its in-store personal care and wellness products.

2. Plus, CVS is converting many of its stores into clinics over the next few years—a partnership with Uber could help it address a major barrier to care: lack of transport.

For context, last November, CVS **announced** a **\$1 billion** plan to shutter **900** of its retail stores over the next three years (nearly 10% of its US locations), and transform its remaining stores into primary care offices with services like diagnostic testing, mental health services, and hearing exams.

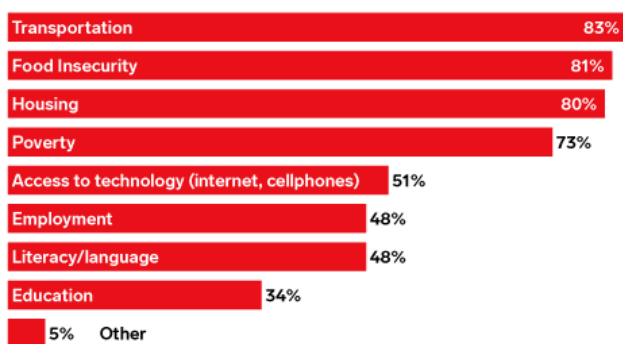
Through a partnership with the likes of Uber, retail giant CVS could help boost its patients' health outcomes by knocking down barriers to care:

- Nearly 62% of parents say they delayed or went without healthcare within the past 12 months due to SDOH barriers like employment or lack of proper transportation, per the Urban institute's April 2021 survey.**

***Go deeper:** To learn more about how payers and providers are interested in addressing SDOH barriers to improve patients' health outcomes, check out our [2021 Social Determinants of Health Report](#).*

Social Determinants of Health that Most Impact Health Plans According to US Health Planners, Aug 2020

% of respondents



Note: n=177; plan types represented among respondent organizations included commercial (large group, small group, individual), Medicare Advantage, Marketplace, Medicaid, D-SNP or MMP, and MLTSS
Source: Altruista Health, "2020 Annual Payer Index Survey," Nov 9, 2020

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