

# The Evolution of Social Care: BeneLynk's Vision



Over the last decade, we have watched as the concept of “Social Determinants of Health” and more recently “Social Drivers of Health” (both abbreviated SDoH) have gained widespread recognition as a fundamental component of health outcomes. The oft-repeated statistic is that 80% of health outcomes are attributable to barriers related to SDoH. To improve health and health outcomes, managed care plans and others are seeking ways to remove these barriers and increase health equity.

BeneLynk’s mission is to improve health outcomes by giving people the advocacy they deserve, while giving managed care plans the information and insights they need. We trace our roots to a company called Social Service Coordinators, and we still think of the work we do as social care. In the following, we refer to the people to whom we provide social care as “members.” This reflects our focus on managed care plans and their members. However, that name could easily be replaced by “patient” or “recipient” or just “person.”

## Lead with Help: Uncover SDoH Barriers and Surface Solutions



One of the most exciting evolutions has been the growing recognition of the need to gather and systematically document SDoH challenges. To address SDoH barriers in a substantial way, these barriers must be cataloged.

Too often, well-intentioned social care is delivered in a haphazard fashion. To impact the factors that prevent people from living their healthiest lives, we must start by understanding what those barriers are. This begins, reasonably enough, with an [assessment of barriers](#). This assessment is best conducted in a human-to-human conversation and must be paired with an immediate plan to address SDoH barriers.

True social care must center the individual's experience and concerns. We cannot ask a member to open up about fundamental life-challenges and offer nothing more than to document the challenges. The gathering of information should be combined seamlessly with a partnered approach to addressing the underlying challenges. The member's prioritization comes first. At BeneLynk we call this "leading with help." Our advocates are equipped to offer [a wide range of interventions](#), but the first priority will be the interventions the member values most.



## Make the Human-to-Human Connection Backed by Superior Technology

As part of this assessment, SDoH barriers should be documented systematically. BeneLynk strongly supports the work of the [Gravity Project](#) in its efforts to instill peer review and coding discipline for SDoH barriers. These classifications are an essential component of any strategy to understand and address SDoH challenges. Once the challenges are documented, the work can begin.

In providing social care, we believe in two complementary principles:

1. Social care is first and foremost a personal connection. As such, true advocacy must be centered around a [human-to-human conversation](#).
2. The role of technology is to empower the advocate. A professional advocate understands how to identify barriers, gain member trust, and work toward a solution. That advocate should be served by a [technology platform](#) that promotes intervention by incorporating a wide range of social care programs from federal, state, local, and non-governmental sources.



## Provide Advocacy by Driving Eligibility Education and Awareness

In addition to the challenges of navigating complex application processes, many social benefits with the greatest potential for positive change are hindered by a lack of awareness. Whether it's SNAP benefits to address food insecurity, LIHEAP benefits to help

keep the heat on, or Medicaid benefits to increase available capital, some of the best programs often remained unused simply because potential claimants are unaware of the benefits or of their potential eligibility. To remedy this, outreach must engage the member through the right medium, at the right time, in the right language, and with the right message. Achieving this requires both the creativity to continually try new approaches, and the humility to always listen for a better way.



## Funding a Long-Term Social Care Program

To maintain the requisite consistency to make meaningful change, social care needs a reliable source of funding. At BeneLynk we believe this is best achieved by understanding the business of our managed care clients and by creating an alignment between impactful social care, and demonstrable [return on investment](#). Social care must be delivered in a consistent, predictable, and scientific manner. Our approach is to enable this through alignment with the revenue and cost-drivers of our managed care customers. This care must also align with regulatory requirements. As CMS, state Medicaid agencies, and the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), among others, look to encourage SDoH interventions, a robust social care program must meet these needs.



## Health is More than Healthcare

We know that our healthcare system needs to do better in serving members with social care challenges. We know that inequities exist in both care and outcomes. To make this leap forward requires caring, professional advocates establishing a human-to-human connection while being supported by an integrated technology platform.



## About BeneLynk

BeneLynk is a national Social Determinants of Health vendor for managed care companies. We engage members to Understand SDoH challenges and to provide professional advocacy to access benefits. BeneLynk helps to remove barriers to allow members to live their healthiest lives.