



Building a Data-Led Cancer Management Strategy **for a Public Education Organization**

Story Overview

A Pennsylvania public education service organization was facing unusually high cancer-related claims within its employee health plan. IMA identified that cancer was not only a growing national cost driver, but an outsized and persistent issue in this population, with more claimants, higher costs, and more severe diagnoses than expected.

Challenge

The client's plan was experiencing unsustainable cost pressure, including annual increases in the 10%–12% range driven heavily by cancer claims. The situation was especially complex because diagnoses were appearing in a younger population that may be less likely to receive routine screenings, and no single vendor could address prevention, early detection, treatment navigation, and complex care support in one solution. Maintaining the status quo meant continued cost escalation and poorer member outcomes.



From insight to coordinated,
multi-stage solution.



IMA's Strategy and Actions

IMA's employee benefits team acted to support the client by:

- + Using Cedar Gate analytics and multi-year claims data to identify cancer as an anomalous and high-impact cost driver within the plan.
- + Benchmarking the client's cancer burden against broader market trends to show why targeted intervention was warranted.
- + Designing a client-specific, multi-stage strategy spanning early detection, member support during treatment, and access to centers of excellence for complex care.
- + Running an RFP process, evaluating vendor proposals, and modeling potential ROI and member impact so the client could choose best-fit partners for each stage of the cancer journey.
- + Partnering with internal marketing and design resources to build an employee communication campaign that encouraged participation and reinforced employer support.



Why It Worked

This approach worked because IMA did more than flag rising costs. The team translated data into a practical strategy, involved the client throughout an iterative decision-making process, and helped assemble a coordinated solution around both financial stewardship and member experience. The work was supported by analytics, cross-functional collaboration, and a willingness to guide the client through a less traditional but high-potential approach.

Key Takeaways

This story demonstrates how IMA can use data to uncover hidden plan risks and then help clients build tailored, multi-part solutions rather than relying on a single-point fix. Other teams can apply the same model: let the data guide the opportunity, involve the client early, and draw on internal expertise when evaluating emerging or more complex solutions.



THE RESULT:

After an initial investment of roughly \$200,000 to \$250,000, the program produced two early-stage cancer identifications within the first six months, with estimated savings exceeding the initial spend. Just as important, the early findings improved treatment outlooks, increased employee appreciation for employer-funded screening access, and gave the client enough confidence to expand eligibility for the program.

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NPN 1316541 | IMA, Inc dba IMA Insurance Services
California Lic #0H64724 | CT-SS-IMA-EB-060326

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