



When worlds collide: how personal and professional experiences landed me at Optavise

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Years ago, when someone very close to me received a cancer diagnosis, it was like time stood still. There was so much to take in and so many to do's when the last thing we felt equipped to do in that moment was make important decisions.

It was the nurses and social workers who enabled us to take our first steps forward when the words, "you have cancer" had us frozen in our tracks. These members of our care team quite literally picked us up and wrapped their arms around us. They reassured us, guided us, and pointed us in the right direction.

Looking back on that time, I realize how important the human element was in our healthcare experience. These individuals journeyed with us – and that journey was a long and winding one. They provided emotional support that we desperately needed and also helped with the practical matters of making appointments, finding support groups, and managing the side effects of treatment. I'm eternally grateful for these people. No website, app or pamphlet could ever have provided for us what they did at such a vulnerable time.

As someone who works on the periphery of the healthcare industry, I sometimes hear the phrase "health is human." For me, that is no more

perfectly embodied than in the group of humans on our care team who rallied around us from day one.

When the professional becomes personal

Working in the employee benefits industry, I'm keenly aware of how important benefits are at any time –especially during health crises. I'm also aware of just how complicated it can be to interpret those benefits at any time – especially during health crises.

It's my professional experience working in the employee benefits realm coupled with my personal experience as a caregiver that, together, led me to accept a new role six months ago. I now work at Optavise, a place where the phrase "health is human" is not only a guiding principle but a daily practice.

Optavise is a service employers can secure for their employees that provides direct access to human advocates who can take on both the big stuff and the small stuff when it comes to navigating the healthcare system. An employee who calls Optavise will be connected to a real, live person who is not only seasoned in navigating the wild west of healthcare but who also brings that human element back into the mix.

Advocates for the win

When asked what makes a good advocate, my answer is always compassion. Our advocates bring a healthy dose of it to every interaction, making meaningful connections in the process. It's my experience that these connections are the ones that absolutely make the difference in life's scary moments.

Optavise advocates can guide employees through the overwhelming maze of a diagnosis by taking on tasks like identifying specialists, helping make appointments, and interpreting complicated medical bills.

Our advocates will wait on hold so you don't have to. Our advocates will do the research for you on which specialists to consider.

Our advocates will help guide you to services and resources you may not have even known were available to you but that can be hugely helpful on your journey back to health.

Our advocates give you their direct contact information so you can reach them at any time. They keep you updated as they track down answers. They push back on insurance companies when the bill you received is higher than it should be.

Simply put, our advocates embody the health is human philosophy that should be at the center of our healthcare system but too often isn't.

I often say that I've worked my way through the ugly side of healthcare. I am where I'm at today because I wanted to work for an organization whose motives are in the right place. Ultimately, I came to Optavise because we're here to help people – with the human touch that can mean everything in life's darkest moments as well as its brightest ones.

Health is human can mean many things. To me, it will always mean compassion, and I'm fortunate to work for an organization that prioritizes it.

