



Case study:

How one-on-one care helped a Saudi expat living with multiple sclerosis in the U.S.

Your In Touch Care programme

Make the most of
Aetna International's
CARE Team



Welcome to In Touch Care: personalised care when you need it most

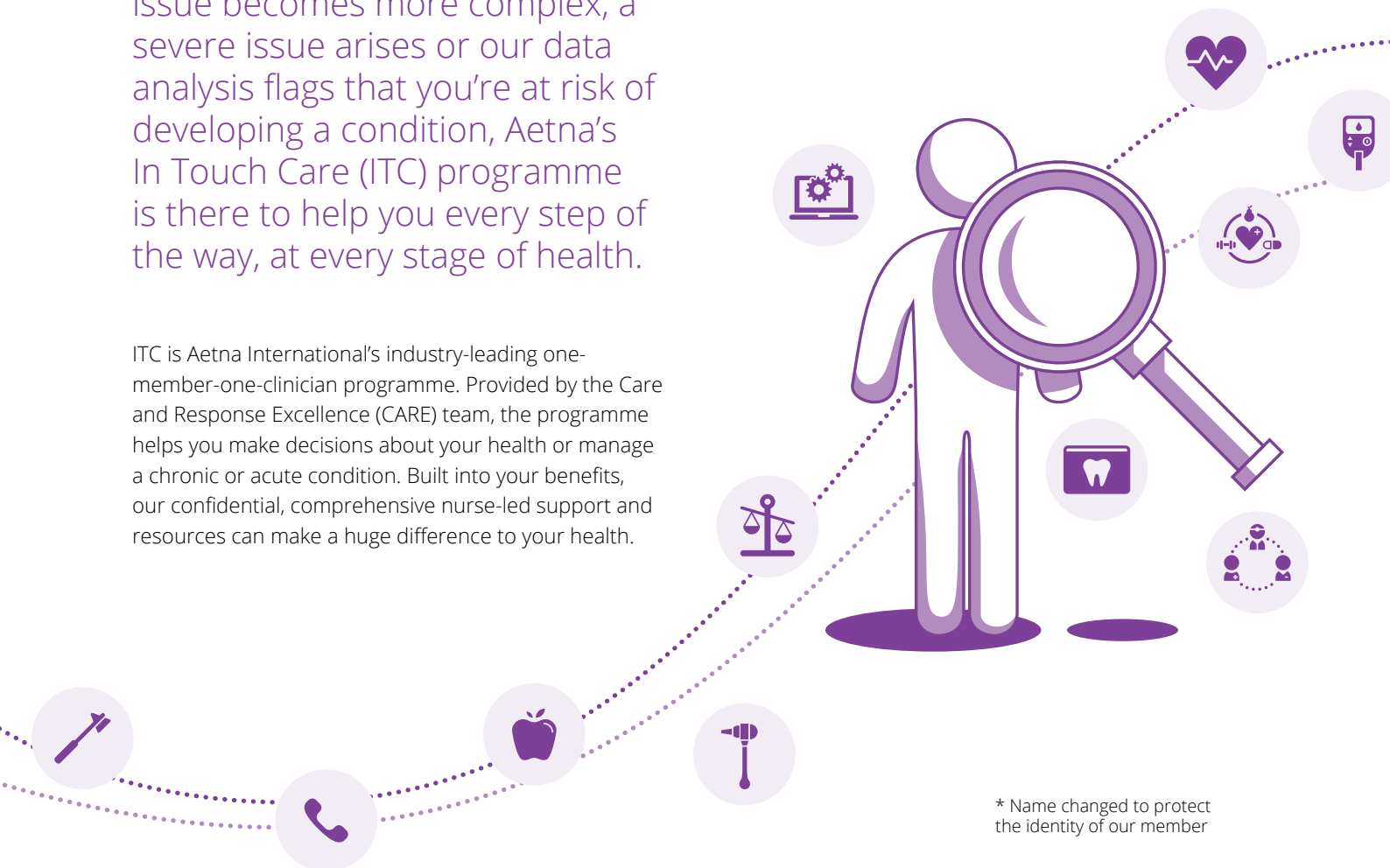
Your health can change at any moment. Whether a long-term issue becomes more complex, a severe issue arises or our data analysis flags that you're at risk of developing a condition, Aetna's In Touch Care (ITC) programme is there to help you every step of the way, at every stage of health.

ITC is Aetna International's industry-leading one-member-one-clinician programme. Provided by the Care and Response Excellence (CARE) team, the programme helps you make decisions about your health or manage a chronic or acute condition. Built into your benefits, our confidential, comprehensive nurse-led support and resources can make a huge difference to your health.



Meet Bassel

Read how the CARE team worked to support this Saudi expat living in the U.S. from his diagnosis with MS to crucial surgery and ongoing treatment. See page 4



* Name changed to protect the identity of our member



Request ITC support via the CARE team

To contact the CARE team to request ITC support, log in to the [Health Hub](#) – your online member account. Don't have an account? Register in two minutes: Aetnainternational.com/members/login.do

The CARE team can also support with global pre-trip planning, coordination of care, help finding specialist providers and medical emergency assistance.

The power of one – one clinician, one member

Because you have one dedicated clinician by your side, we're able to more effectively assess your needs and support you on the road to better health.

Your go-to clinician, who is trained in motivational interviewing techniques and cultural sensitivity, will:

- Get to know you and your health history
- Develop a customised action plan
- Help you make lifestyle related changes to help you get well or manage your condition
- Provide condition-specific education and support, and help you make informed decisions about your treatment
- Handle your preauthorisation request
- Help you navigate care, prepare for a hospital stay or plan for your recovery
- Coordinate care or medical referrals for you
- Serve as your health advocate if you face challenges

ITC in action

To give a real-world example of how In Touch Care works, meet Bassel, a Saudi expat with Aetna International private medical insurance living in America. The following pages tell his story: how, in 2013 he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) and how our CARE team were on hand to help him with everything from medication to surgery.

At Aetna International, we hope you will find these pages useful and that you know you can turn to In Touch Care as part of your plan cover because we aim to be there for you no matter what – just as we continue to be there for Bassel.

MS in the U.S.:

How one-on-one care helped a
Saudi expat with multiple sclerosis

MS in the U.S.

7,000 miles from
home, a man with a
debilitating disease
navigates a complex
health care system
with the help of his
dedicated nurse

The patient

Meet Bassel*, a 59-year-old man from Saudi Arabia who lives and works in the U.S. with his wife and son. Bassel has been an Aetna International member since 2013 and has an International Private Medical Insurance (iPMI) plan with health and wellness benefits.



2013: The illness

In 2013, Bassel starts to show some of the symptoms of multiple sclerosis (MS) - a condition that affects more than [2.3 million](#) people worldwide. The symptoms can include fatigue and weakness; vision, mobility and cognitive problems; and pain. Later that year, he is diagnosed with MS, a condition in which the body's immune system begins to attack the central nervous system.

As well as the challenges of his emerging symptoms, Bassel also has to navigate the complexities of a health care system in a foreign country. It's overwhelming, but he doesn't have much choice.

As part of the In Touch Care programme, Aetna International assign a registered nurse to look after Bassel while managing his case.



* Name changed to protect the identity of our member

The partnership



Bassel and his dedicated nurse address his symptoms, sort medication and navigate the U.S. health care system

The nurse

Meet Souha, part of the Care and Response Excellence (CARE) team who support members on a one-to-one basis. On becoming Bassel's personal nurse and point of contact, the two begin a journey together. With so much unknown and uncertain, it is comforting for Bassel to know that, through the ITC programme, Souha is there.

First, Bassel needs medication to manage his symptoms and help prevent his condition from worsening. Souha receives the request and reviews his case and answers all of his questions about his diagnosis, medication and treatment needs. The CARE team always work together to understand their patients' needs and together Souha and Bassel build a picture of his unique situation to make the best decisions about his health care. By working closely together, Bassel begins to manage his condition.

Each year, Souha reviews Bassel's situation and preauthorises his medication for the year.

Meet Souha



- 10 years of paediatric, neo-natal and intensive care experience
- 4 years with Aetna International
- Speaks Arabic, English and French

When I first speak with my patients, they're often scared and unsure about how to proceed. It means a lot to me to be able to help them through what can be one of the most difficult times in their lives and that goes for the families as well //

2016:

An acute episode

An episode leaves Bassel in pain and unable to walk so Souha organises specialists and surgery



An acute episode

At the end of 2016, Bassel suffers an acute episode with excruciating pain (9/10) in his back and right leg. After trying to walk with a cane he realises he needs a wheelchair, becoming reliant on his wife and son to get around, manage everyday tasks and manage his pain.

Bassel contacts his one-to-one nurse to ask for guidance and support as his condition clearly needs further investigation. Over the years, Souha has become familiar with Bassel and his situation from his health history to his life and circumstances. She recommends a primary care doctor's appointment – and the doctor recommends an MRI scan. Souha preauthorises the MRI and stays in touch with Bassel and his family via phone and text message, which gives them direct, quick and convenient access to the information and support they need at this difficult time.

The diagnosis

The MRI reveals a herniated disk in Bassel's lumbar region and the doctor recommends a consultation with a specialist surgeon. Souha preauthorises the appointment and connects with the specialist who recommends surgery. Souha reviews the case and, after discussion with Bassel and his wife, preauthorises his surgery.

Souha begins to coordinate Bassel's post-surgery care and rehabilitation with the specialist and hospital to make sure everything runs smoothly for Bassel and his family.

2017: Surgery

Souha supports Bassel and his family as he recovers from successful surgery



Surgery

In January, the big day arrives and Bassel undergoes surgery on his back. With a lot at stake, everyone is overjoyed that the procedure is executed successfully.

Not all patients require rehab post-surgery, but in Bassel's case he needs special attention and is quickly transferred to prearranged rehabilitation care for 14 days. All this time, Souha liaises with the hospital regarding his progress and updates his family who understandably want to stay in the loop.

After 14 days of rehabilitation and with the aid of a walker, Bassel begins to walk again.



It was a tense time, but Bassel, his family and the surgeons were all fantastic //

Souha, Aetna International

Ongoing support

Bassel is back at work and Souha continues to support him and his family manage his symptoms

2017: Ongoing support

The big job is over, but as the months pass, Bassel again needs advice. He asks Souha to recommend a local primary care physician for specialised local support. She gets to work and finds a quality local provider who is part of Aetna International's network of leading providers and specialists, and he makes an appointment.

As part of the growing relationship, Souha also helps Bassel with medication refills – connecting directly with his local pharmacy to organise.

2017: Back to work

In March 2017, less than three months after back surgery, Bassel no longer needs to use a cane and returns to work. He is relieved, and he is not alone.

2018 and on

Today, the pair continue to speak, and Bassel is managing his MS. He is as healthy as he can be as he continues to enjoy his life as an employee, a friend, a father and a husband.



How to benefit from In Touch Care

The personal attention Bassel receives to help him manage his condition is not unique, it's the norm. All members who opt to receive support via the CARE team's In Touch Care programme receive this level of personal care because we believe in being there for our members whenever and wherever we're needed.

// We [in the CARE team] often build nurse-patient relationships over long periods of time and through difficult stages in people's lives, it's not surprising that we really care about their well-being. That's why it feels good to be part of a success story like Bassel's – being a central point between him, his family, clinicians and providers to ensure he gets the best outcome. //



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