

# Optum for Optimal Health Over 55

And for quality healthcare without barriers  
by Tyler Butler

▶ Optum Care has been a leading healthcare provider since 2011, serving more than 19 million patients across the United States. From California to Pennsylvania, Optum is committed to advancing health equity, envisioning a world where local communities can provide equal access to quality healthcare without any barriers.

To achieve this vision, Optum focuses on building trust, expanding access and tailoring support to meet the unique needs of individual communities. Ben Brock, Optum Community Centers director, says, "Health inequity is a risk as great as any, but we have the tools, the partnerships and the will to address it together."

In Arizona, Optum has made a pledge to support the senior population, recognizing that everyone should have the opportunity to live a full and healthy life. The company is committed to improving access and removing obstacles so people can get the care they need, when and where they want it.

Optum offers personalized care that is close to home, with its community centers focused on those aged 55 and older, including Medicare patients. Optum operates as a part of the community and is committed to engaging the entire community, not just its members and patients. One of Optum's core engagement efforts is the Optum Community Centers, which are neighborhood hubs for all seniors in the community.

Optum has a deep network of more than 3,600 healthcare providers in the Phoenix Metro and Tucson region for regular health and wellness needs. The company offers remote wellness options for convenience, such as a 24/7 telephone advice nurse line and quick-care video visits, along with in-home wellness exams and care visits when needed.

Optum is proud of its focus on communities and health equity. The company prides itself on offering the highest quality of care and doing all it can to serve those in underserved and at-risk populations, including the elderly.

Optum has six community center locations across the region, including one in Tucson and the newest one just opened in East Mesa. These centers welcome all seniors in the community to gather, grow, and stay well together. They offer free social events, fitness classes led by experts, and health and wellness presentations by Optum healthcare professionals, all operating in an open, inviting environment.

While the focus of Optum's community offerings differs from market to market, each program strives for greater health equity, particularly for those who are financially disadvantaged or have a disparately high prevalence of health complications. Optum partners with a number of organizations both company-wide and locally to tackle health equity issues on macro and micro levels.

This includes a nationwide partnership with One World Surgery and localized support of national organizations such as the American Heart Association, Dress for Success, the



American Cancer Society and others. Beyond the Community Centers' work with the nonprofits mentioned, and others, Optum Arizona works hand in hand with American Heart Association and will be sponsoring the 2023 Heart Walk in Phoenix and Tucson.

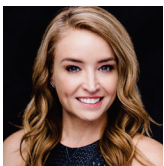
Another partnership with Southwest Human Development engaged seniors for a bag painting event in conjunction with Grandparents Day. The site coordinator collaborated with the Art Workshop instructor to facilitate a plan for the event. Together with seniors, they created 50 bags that were subsequently delivered to Southwest Human Development and given to local foster children on Grandparents Day. Similarly, Optum Community Center staff and seniors also supported Southwest Human Development Gingerbread Kids drive, providing gifts for 30 children in need.

"Our partnership with Optum's Community Centers goes back more than five years, and the Southwest Human Development team could not be more grateful for the support that we've received. From our Back to School and Gingerbread Holiday Toy drives to decorating bags for children in foster care, the Optum team always goes above and beyond to support children right here in Arizona," says Jake Adams, chief development officer for Southwest Human Development.

Locally, Optum's Arizona Community Centers have been working with St. Mary's Food Bank since the summer of 2020. To support the community through the worst of the pandemic, they set up hours for each community center to accept contactless drive-by food donations weekly. Once in-person activities in the centers resumed, they decided to continue the food drives indefinitely. Between staff and members, they have donated over 6,500 pounds of food since August of 2020.

As Ben Brock, Optum Community Centers director, shares, "Human beings are social animals, and this is true regardless of age. We need to be with each other, and Optum Community Centers bring seniors together to improve their overall health and well-being." ■

Optum [optum.com](https://optum.com)  
Optum Community Centers [optum.com/azcommunitycenters](https://optum.com/azcommunitycenters)



Tyler Butler is a chief social impact officer for a publicly traded corporate portfolio where she leads programs that positively impact humanity. She is also the founder of 11Eleven Consulting, and she is often cited as a subject matter expert by *Forbes*, *SHRM*, *Entrepreneur*, *U.S. News & World Report* and more. [linkedin.com/in/tylerbutler](https://www.linkedin.com/in/tylerbutler)