

# Building Resilience and Well-Being Amidst a Global Pandemic at John Muir Health



Best Benefits, Wellness and Well-Being Program, Silver



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 **JOHN MUIR  
HEALTH**

# Background

John Muir Health is a not-for-profit integrated health system of doctors, hospitals, clinics, and health care services located in Northern California. With a reputation for high-quality patient care, John Muir Health frequently lands on lists such as the 2021/2022 list of America's Best Hospitals ranked by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Prior to the pandemic, the organization had a strong leadership development program with a coaching component. Well-aware of caregiver burnout and compassion fatigue as contributing factors to attrition and absenteeism, John Muir Health also offered resources such as an Employee Assistance Program, Care for the Caregiver Program, and spiritual support services to its 6,400 employees.

“

*Our patients and their loved ones are coming to us in what are possibly their worst moments—unless they're here to add a baby to their family. Typically they're anxious and stressed and possibly full of fear about a potential diagnosis.”*

— Lisa Foust,

Chief People and Engagement Officer,  
John Muir Health

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# Added stressors of the pandemic

The new challenges brought about by the pandemic multiplied the known ongoing stressors of work in healthcare while adding others: change fatigue from the constant stream of new information and protocols; increased compassion fatigue due to limited visitation policies; and personal life disruption from impacts to schooling, elder care, and family member layoffs. Leaders, spiritual counselors, and chaplains reported the high variability of impact: the level of anxiety and fear varied from person to person depending on their situation at work and at home.



*You could put a roomful of employees and physicians together and there would be a variation of what they are most stressed about and what contributes most to their feeling of burnout and disengagement.”*

— Lisa Foust,

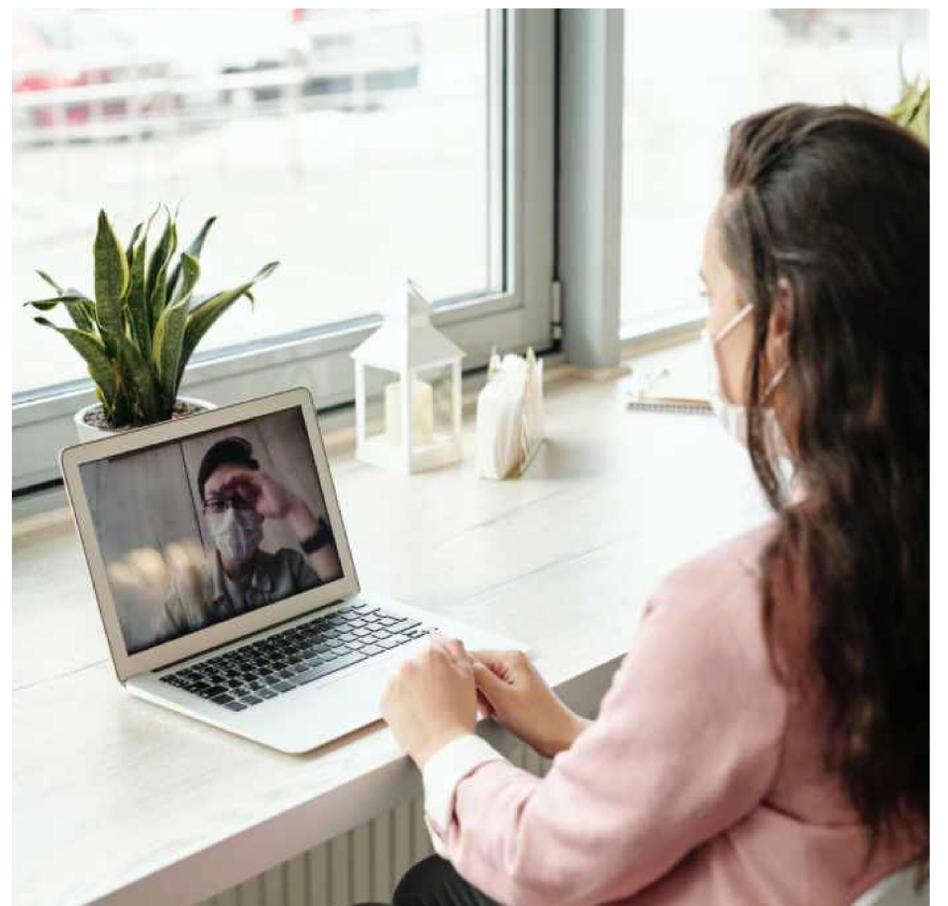
Chief People and Engagement Officer,  
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# Solution: Make BetterUp & coaching available to all

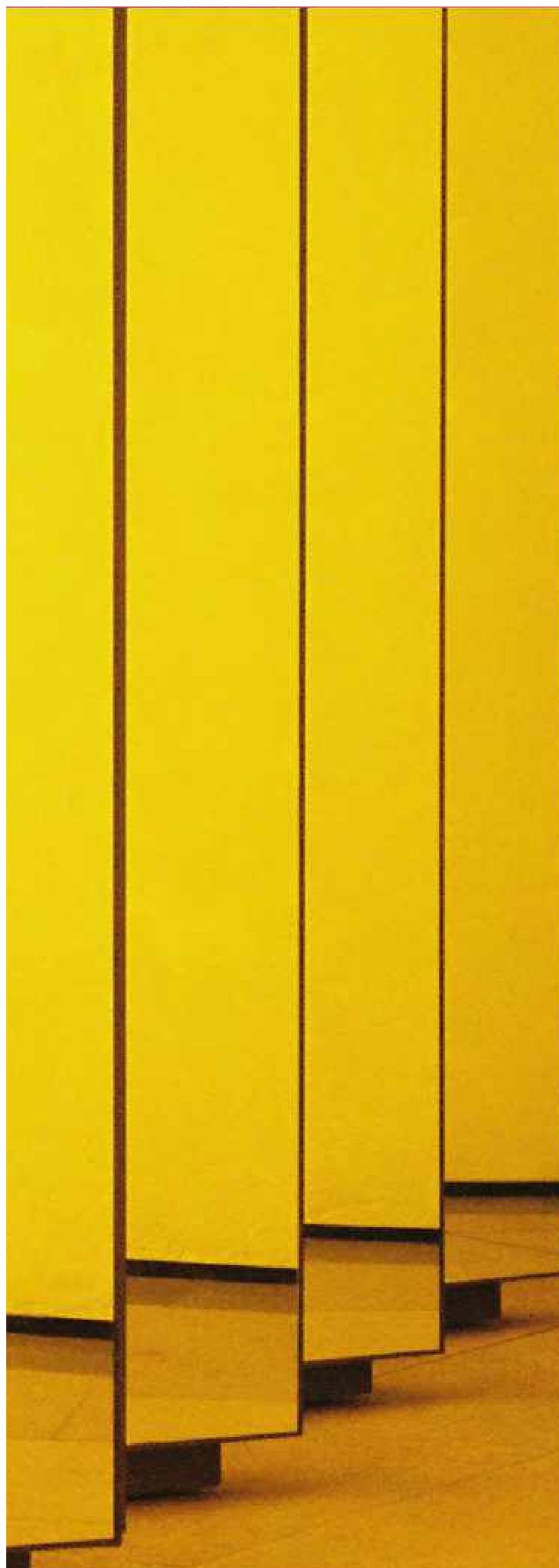
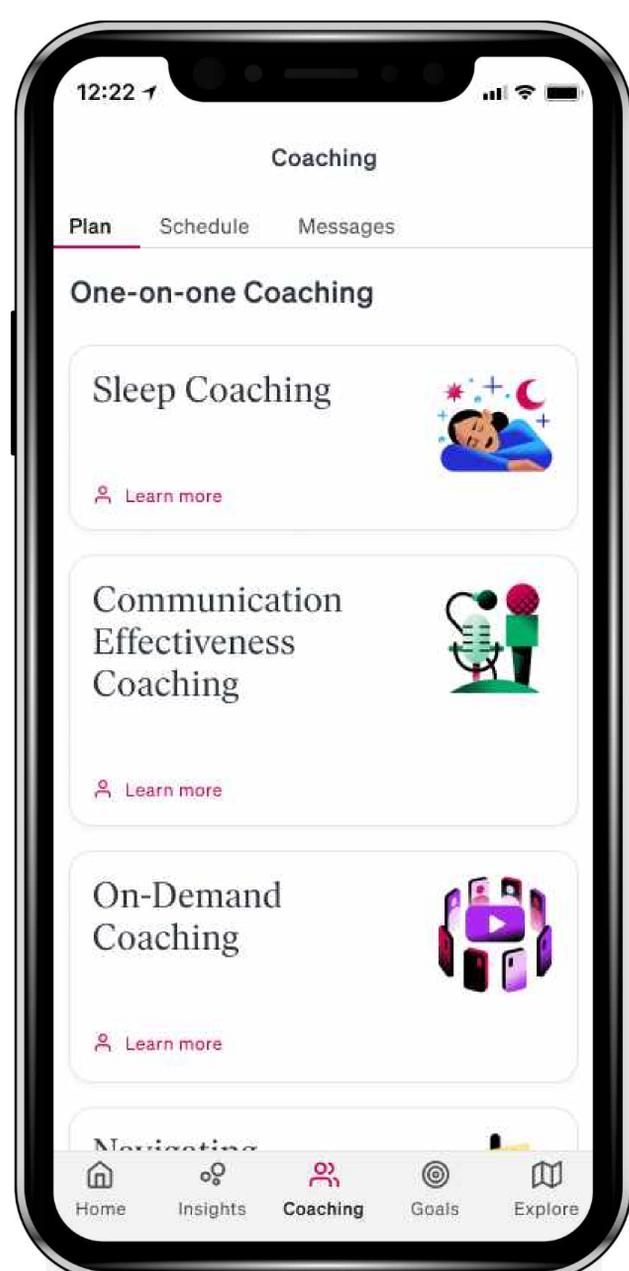
Knowing that they needed to enable more employees to receive needed care, Lisa Foust, John Muir Health's Chief People and Engagement Officer, initiated the development of a coaching program that would increase the breadth of support to meet a wide array of needs. Made possible by BetterUp's give-back program to frontline leaders and caregivers, the program would be available to all employees. It would be the first such program in the history of BetterUp and John Muir Health.

Building an accessible program that could drive a measurable shift in employee well-being came with challenges: the stigma of using mental health services, and the need for personalization to address a wide array of experiences and schedules. “The life of a healthcare employee is so busy and their lives beyond the job are so full that it has to be easy,” said Foust.



# Program design

BetterUp's mobile-friendly coaching and content delivery was an optimal fit for this on-the-move workforce. In conjunction with Foust and her team, BetterUp identified coaching specializations that included well-being, nutrition, sleep, navigating change, parenting, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Each employee would be offered 24/7 BetterUp Care, unlimited 1-1 and group coaching, and learning pathways to address key concerns. If needed, participants could be referred to therapy above and beyond the benefits of the standard medical and EAP offerings. With the pandemic in full swing months before the COVID-19 vaccine approval, speed to launch was crucial. The team set a goal of six weeks to design and roll out the program.



# Measurement plan

To provide a baseline for measurement, a well-being assessment was given to each participant at onboarding and after 90 days. The BetterUp real-time engagement and insights dashboard would enable the John Muir Health team to monitor the overall progress of caregivers and physicians over time. To assess progress and surface new areas of focus, the team scheduled an insights review every quarter.

## Rollout: Leveraging the network effect

No stranger to change management in the fast-moving world of world-class healthcare delivery, John Muir Health leveraged successful approaches from past programs for its internal marketing and communications plan. This included a user-friendly webpage, a direct mail campaign, and posters, flyers, and promotional materials in physical locations. News about the program was also delivered in internal communication channels, including newsletters, leadership meetings, intranet, email, and even a QR code for ease in accessing the platform. Finally, the team engaged the organization's network of spiritual counselors and Chaplains embedded across the organization to share information about the program.

Because some leaders had participated in BetterUp coaching already, John Muir Health leveraged their experiences in the leadership meetings. Previous coaching participants shared how the coaching helped them, how it inspired them, and how it shifted their approach to the challenges they were facing. The network effect compounded as more employees participated.

“

*Employees, just like leaders, are learning from each other.*

*They're learning about how customizable the coaching opportunity is, and how motivating and inspiring it can be.”*

— Lisa Foust,

Chief People and Engagement Officer,  
John Muir Health

# Results: Increased Well-being and Strength

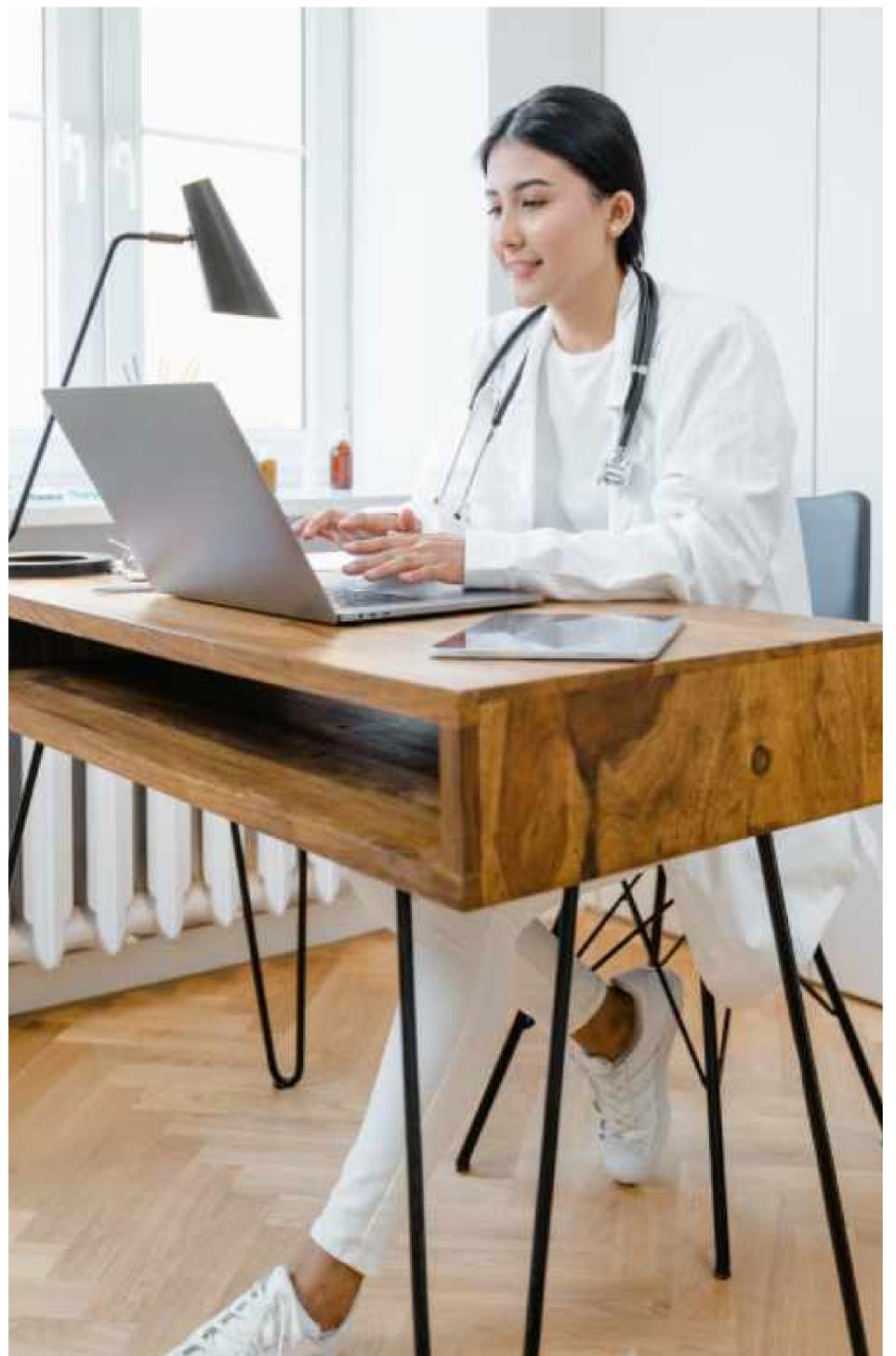
In the first 90 days, 15% of John Muir Health's total employee population activated a BetterUp account, and **10.9% of the population engaged on the platform** in one or more of the following activities: engaged in at least one coaching session, completed an interactive learning experience, or engaged in a therapy session (referred to a 3rd party therapy provider).

- Those who engaged in coaching sessions utilized an average of 3.3 sessions within the first 90 days.
- Well-being was the most common form of coaching, followed by nutrition, parenting, and sleep.
- For the digital learning experience, resilience and stress management were the most commonly accessed topics.

The overall growth across all five well-being dimensions (outlook, adaptability, fulfillment, self-care, and coping) measured in the benchmark increased by nearly 10%. John Muir Health employees started below BetterUp's benchmark across all dimensions. They surpassed the benchmark in two areas in just 90 days, offering a beacon of hope that stress and burnout can be mitigated for healthcare employees.

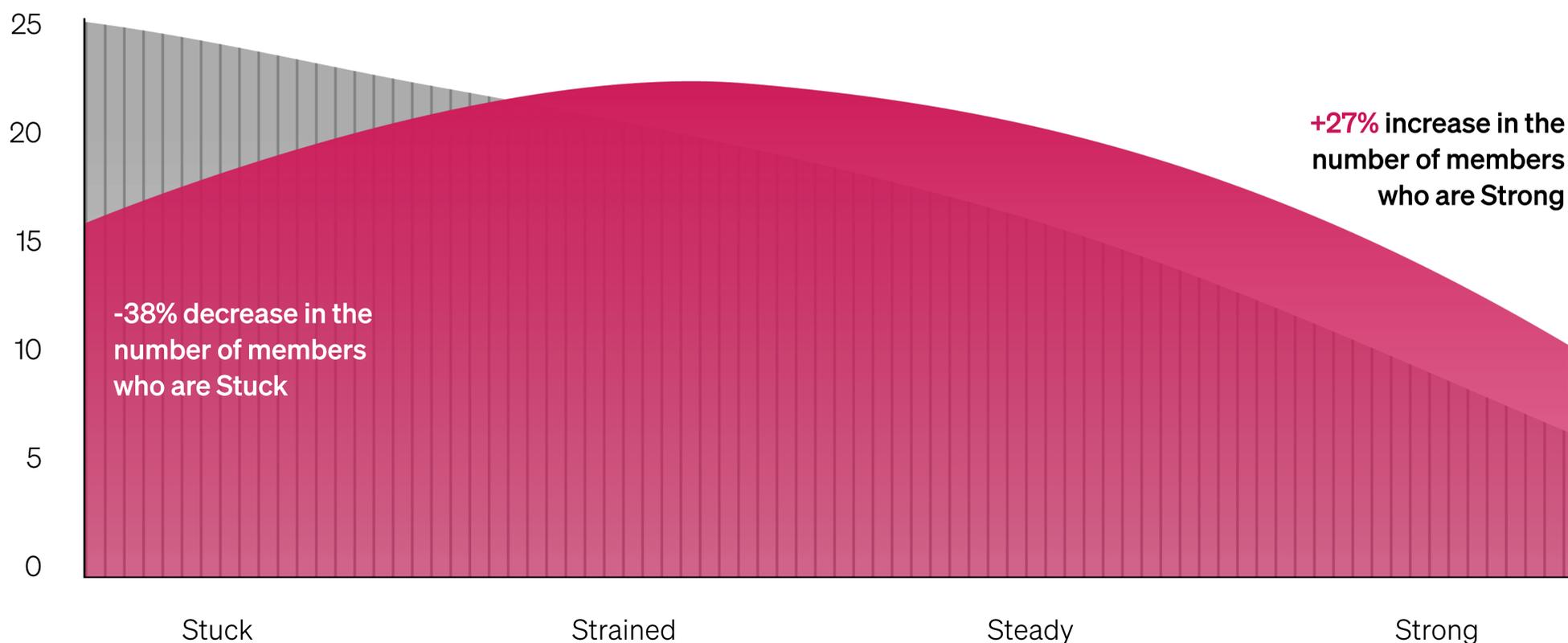
Baseline measures on the well-being spectrum showed that those engaging in the platform were experiencing poor levels of well-being that could be impacting their performance. **BetterUp participants showed a 38% decline in feeling "Stuck" and a 27% increase in feeling "Strong."**

The overall satisfaction with coaching was **9.75/10**, and **68%** of sessions were rated "life-changing" or "amazing."



# Health care workers go from "Stuck" to "Strong"

■ Baseline ■ Reflection point



“

One member was feeling very isolated and lonely, and after discussing how she could reach out to others, even virtually, she is experiencing more of a sense of connection and feels happier.”

“

A member was experiencing increased stress as she tried to balance working from home, two young children at home, and feeling overwhelmed. She was able to create a healthier work/life balance, decrease stress, and care for self and family.”

“

Coaching members to provide feedback with team members has alleviated their levels of frustration and resulted in more productive interactions.”

“

One member has prevented burnout. She is now engaged at work and performing at higher levels. She exercises, feels better and has improved professional and personal relationships.”

— John Muir Health Leaders,  
on the improvements seen in BetterUp participants

# Building organizational resilience

Reflecting on the last two years, there's no doubt that constant change is the new normal. John Muir Health found that it could offer personalized support to all of its employees during a time of rapid change and drive a measurable improvement in employee well-being. By doing so, the organization helps build resilience for the future and reap longer-term gains through increased employee engagement, loyalty, and commitment to patients. The ripple effects of the positive experiences of coaching can be expected to contribute to a stronger organization and continue John Muir Health's reputation for outstanding patient care.

“

*Resilience is about finding ways that are incredibly personalized and customized to meet our employees exactly where they are given the stresses and the challenges that they're experiencing.*

— Lisa Foust,

Chief People and Engagement Officer,  
John Muir Health

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# John Muir Health summary

## Business context

- Non-profit healthcare organization, 6,400 employees
- Needed to address caregiver burnout and impacts of the ongoing pandemic

## Program design

Offered unlimited Dedicated coaching and customized learning pathways to all employees

## Results

**15%**

of employees  
enrolled

**10.9%**

engaged with  
the platform

**+9%**

overall well-being

Members experienced:

**-38%**

in feeling “Stuck”

**+27%**

in feeling “Strong”

To learn more about the many ways BetterUp can support your workforce, head to [www.betterup.com/customers](http://www.betterup.com/customers)

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