ZS

StarZS: Enabling Medicare Advantage plans to consistently achieve high performance

Background

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Star Ratings program is crucial to health plans offering Medicare Part C and Part D coverage, as it ties financial incentives to performance. Despite this, health plans continue to face challenges today due to a variety of factors, such as evolving policies based on member needs, diverse domains for evaluating quality of care and siloed processes that lack a holistic strategy to improve star ratings.

There is a need for a solution that addresses these challenges by prioritizing measures for interventions that drive high performance, as well as optimizing resources by targeting members for interventions with impactful outcomes. Medicare Advantage (MA) plans require a solution that effectively tackles last-mile execution through provider activation, member engagement and other touchpoints.

This is why we have developed StarZS, a suite of solutions that integrates data across all service providers, enabling agile decision-making.

Our approach

ZS addresses these challenges through a set of guiding principles that can help health plans improve on Star Ratings:

1. **Strategy:** Our approach combines analytics and industry expertise to help clients develop a customized Stars strategy

2. **One Data Platform:** We work with plans and their service providers to aggregate Stars data into a single platform, enabling plans to track Star performance and make informed decisions.

3. **Integrate insights to the workflow:** We use advanced AI and machine learning (ML) based analytics techniques to generate actionable insights, empowering plans to focus on high-impact areas and optimize resource allocation.

4. **Last mile execution:** Our "analytics to impact" solutions activate strategic priorities on Star Ratings and drive lasting behavior changes.

Impact where it matters.®

Our Solutions

The StarZS suite of solutions consists of four solutions that leverage AI/ML-backed insights to empower health plans identify areas of opportunities that impact their Star Ratings and take actions based on a consistent performance monitoring strategy.

StarZS Planner

The StarZS planner offers **dynamic goal setting,** allowing users to choose high-impact and low-effort measures for improvement. The dashboards ensure a single source of truth, with synced information across all vendor data sources—meaning all the data is reproducible, transformative and can be used to benchmark performance for contracts.

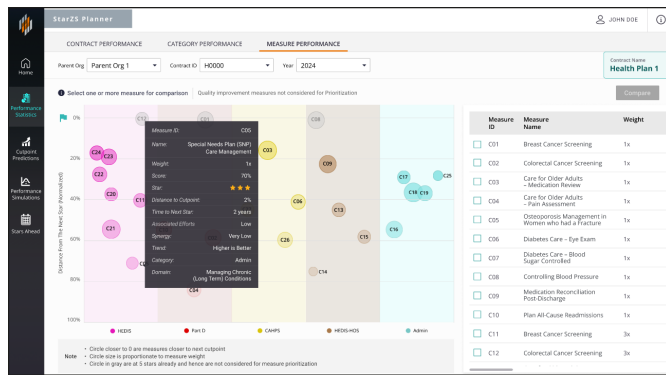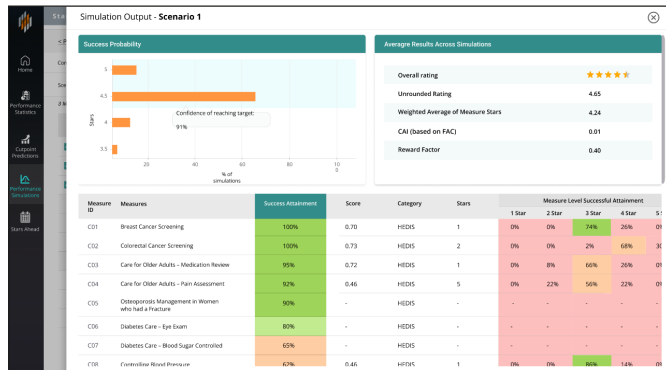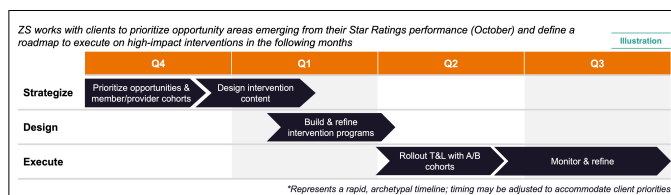**FIGURE 1: The StarZS Planner helps visualize measure prioritization**

FIGURE 2: StarZS Planner simulation output example

StarZS Interventions Design

The intervention toolkit identifies drivers of measure performance using AI/ML based analytics and aids design of focused interventions.

StarZS Monitor

As the **single source of truth**, the StarZS Monitor dashboard enables transparency across the organization with synced information across all data sources and service providers.

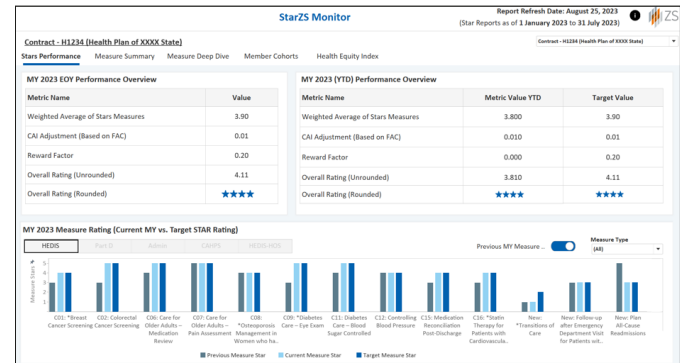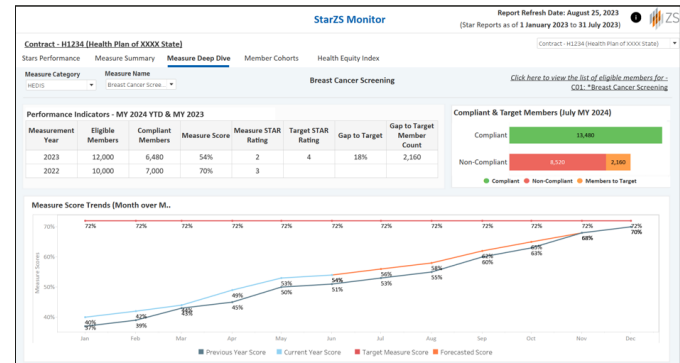**FIGURE 3: The StarZS Monitor dashboard shows a contract's performance overview**

FIGURE 4: The StarZS Monitor dashboard also shows score trends analytics

StarZS Member and Provider Engagement

The solution helps health plan healthcare operations and quality management teams with insights and capabilities to deliver the last mile of member and provider engagement opportunities with turnkey insights and rich data sources.
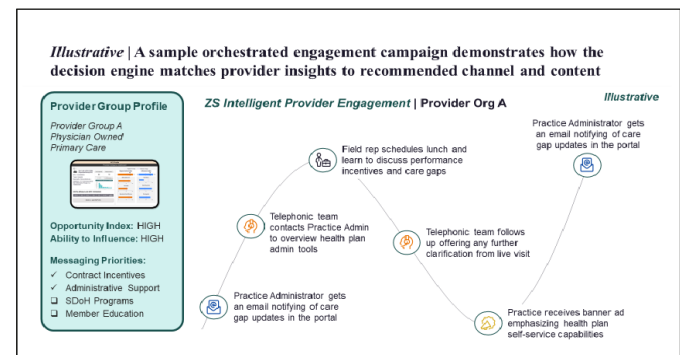
Creating real world impact

ZS has deployed StarZS assets for various use cases of Star Ratings to different health plans so far:

Case study No. 1: Star Rating decline

A medium-sized Blues health plan saw a consistent decline in the Star Ratings of its key Medicare Advantage prescription drug plan (MAPD) contract, which catered to the bulk of its MA enrollments. ZS leveraged **StarZS Planner** for prioritizing measures for interventions, and deployed **StarZS Monitor** to track performance for the prioritized measures, helping the plan to create member cohorts for interventions based on measure compliance.

Results

- 11 recommended measures for performance improvement, improving contract Star Rating from 3.5 stars to 4.5 stars.

- Created member cohorts to improve performance for prioritized measures.

Case study No. 2: Lagging behind

A major national health plan was lagging on triple-weighted medication adherence measures, scoring three-stars in the 2023 Star Ratings. We leveraged the **StarZS Intervention Design** solution to design the interventions by creating patient journey archetypes and isolating drivers of performance gaps.

Results

- Achieved potential an approximately 1% lift in adherence measures, increasing the number of four-star contracts for each measure.

- Designed interventions for each adherence barrier identified, along with opportunities to implement these techniques.

Learn more: https://www.zs.com/industries/health-plans

About ZS

ZS is a management consulting and technology firm focused on transforming global healthcare and beyond. We leverage our leading-edge analytics, plus the power of data, science and products, to help our clients make more intelligent decisions, deliver innovative solutions and improve outcomes for all. Founded in 1983, ZS has more than 13,000 employees in 40 offices worldwide.