

RETAIN YOUR MOST SEASONED EMPLOYEES WITH TARGETED MENOPAUSE BENEFITS

BACKGROUND

Menopause is a natural biological process marked by the end of a woman's menstrual cycles and fertility. Typically beginning in the late 40s or early 50s, a woman's age, duration and severity of symptoms vary widely. Additionally, menopause is pre onset by perimenopause which is also often accompanied by various symptoms.

Women experiencing menopause make up 30% of the workforceⁱⁱ, 64% of women aged 40-65 want menopause specific benefitsⁱⁱⁱ in the workplace, and lost work time associated with menopause costs employers ~\$1.8Bⁱⁱⁱⁱ per year – all of which necessitates employers to proactively address the specific needs of this population. Targeted solutions, plan design modifications and leave policies can ensure continued wellbeing and productivity of your most senior and valued resources across the female reproductive life cycle.

SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE

- Hot flashes
- Chills
- Night sweats
- Sleep disturbances
- Mood changes
- Weight gain and slowed metabolism
- Thinning hair and dry skin^{lv}

CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS^{lvj}:

- Plan Design: Review and update your current plan design to include elements such as the coverage of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), non-pharmacological hormonal replacement treatments, testing and treatment of low bone density and access to mental health services.
- Plan Network: ensure your network has practitioners who have the Certified Menopause Specialist designation.^{lvii}
- Flexible Work Arrangements: Some employers such as the Bank of Ireland, established leave allowances (up to 10 days) specific to menopause related symptoms.^{lviii} Allowing temporary flexibility in work arrangements can ensure that employees work when/where they are most efficient and confident.
- Adaptive Accommodations: like standing desks, ergonomic chairs and rooms with fans or cooling pods for women experiencing hot flashes at work.

- **Point Solutions:** evaluate whether a point solution which includes menopausal care (sometimes offered by the same vendor as fertility benefits) is the right path for your employees and organization. Specific Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) as well as health and wellness programs can also be offered.
- **Communication:** 76% of human resources benefits managers said they discuss [menopause](#)-related issues with employees, but just 3% of female employees would say they've talked about these issues with HR^{lviii}. Decrease this gap and general stigma with menopause specific educational materials, including examples of how to address concerns and who to go to for answers.

HOW OPTIMUM CAN HELP

Evaluating the effects of menopause on your workforce and providing the right solutions can be daunting. Optimum's team of subject matter experts can analyze your clinical data to identify the volume and costs of employees potentially affected by menopause, review your current plan design and network, evaluate the ROI of a point solution, and verify that your employee communications reflect your policies. We then identify and prioritize areas for improvement and manage the implementation of any new solutions. Ultimately, Optimum supports your efforts to optimize health and welfare programs, processes, and systems to ensure all employees get the care they need to be as healthy and effective as possible. Please contact us for more information about how to work with your vendors and internal key stakeholder to provide optimized benefits to your employees while maintaining compliance and containing cost.

ABOUT OPTIMUM

Optimum is a vendor management firm that focuses exclusively on the HR supply chain with turnkey solutions that improve the financial, operating performance, transparency and accountability of HR Benefit programs while still maintaining existing vendor relationships.

Our support of the HR workstream during the M&A lifecycle encompasses operational due diligence, day-one readiness, and post day-one synergies. We assist sponsors in leveraging the aggregate purchasing power of their portfolio to capture value and drive margin expansion.

^{lv} Bureau of Labor Statistics

^{lvii} Bank of America Survey: https://business.bofa.com/content/dam/flagship/workplace-benefits/id20_0905/documents/BofA_Lifestage-Report.pdf

^{lviii} The Mayo Clinic: <https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/mayo-clinic-study-puts-price-tag-on-cost-of-menopause-symptoms-for-women-in-the-workplace/>

^{lvi} The Mayo Clinic: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/menopause/symptoms-causes/syc-20353397>

^{lv} A Great Place to Work: <https://www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/blog/support-menopausal-women-workplace>

^{lvii} <https://portal.menopause.org/NAMS/NAMS/Directory/Menopause-Practitioner.aspx>

^{lviii} <https://www.bankofireland.com/about-bank-of-ireland/press-releases/2022/bank-of-ireland-introduces-paid-menopause-leave/#:~:text=Menopause%20leave%20will%20be%20available,daysof%20paid%20leave%20available>

^{lviii} Bank of America Study: https://business.bofa.com/content/dam/flagship/workplace-benefits/id20_0905/documents/BofA_Lifestage-Report.pdf