



August 14, 2008

Highlights of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Medicare Employer Forum Call Regarding Preview of Innovative Employer Caregiving Programs

3 Speakers

1) Ron Finch – National Business Group on Health

What is the definition of caregiving and why is it important to employers?

- There are two different types of caregiving

1) Employees who have aging parents:

→ Employees must balance the demands of work with caregiving, while co-coordinating access to services, home based treatment, etc. This places a greater demand and higher level of stress on the employee. Employees regularly have to look for assisted living programs and explore in home care options; as their role progresses they also have to evaluate and consider long term skilled nursing facility options.

2) Employees who have children with chronic medical conditions:

→ Employees must find the appropriate care, explore treatment options, and coordinate with schools.

Wayne Burton, MD and Dan Conti, PhD worked on the study, with results published in Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, which found that many employees become depressed within 2 weeks of providing caregiving services.

This often leads to significant levels of Presenteeism. In addition to the obvious impact on performance & productivity from being depressed in the workplace, caregiving concerns often cause pre-occupation and distraction. Time on the job is also inordinately taken up with negotiating and arranging for care.

What is the economic impact of caregiving?

→ It varies by industry, but a general loss of productivity and a high level of presenteeism (64% of total healthcare costs). This cost estimate is based on all factors including worker's compensation, disability, family medical leave etc.

What is Presenteeism?

Presenteeism is the opposite of absenteeism. In contrast to absenteeism, when employees are absent from work, presenteeism discusses the problems faced when employees come to work in spite of illness, which can have similar negative repercussions on business performance.

Presenteeism affects 2 different employee populations:

1) Employee that has an illness (loss in work productivity)

→ This is often seen with depression, productivity is diminished

2) Caregivers – whether it is with a parent or child

→ Decreased productivity, because most of the arrangements for caring for a parent or child must be made during normal business hours

→ Tends to distract or weigh heavily on the minds of employees, so they loose focus on their responsibilities on work. It also takes a significant emotional toll.

Is the situation exacerbated by employers who do not recognize or do not have sympathy for employees who are caregivers?

→ Yes

→ National Business Group on Health has begun an “End of Life Initiative” to develop employer toolkits and resources for dealing with employees with aging parents and other caregiving issues.

2) Susie Butler, Caregiving Initiative (CMS?)

- Caregiving Initiative is an electronic outreach initiative by CMS through monthly E-Newsletter and website- Intention is to effectively communicate the needs of “At-Work-Caregivers” and the issues they face, as well as providing direction to available resources.

- Website available September 18th is www.medicare.gov/caregiving

- September 18th launching internet-based initiative to increase awareness.

3) Greg Link - Administration on Aging (AoA)

- Administration on Aging is part of the Department of Health and Human Services and was created by the Older Americans Act of 1965.

→ Comprised of 650 Area Agencies on Aging all throughout the United States (local points of contact) as well as 56 offices providing support to employers.

Administration on Aging Developed the National Family Caregivers Support Program. It provides the 5 following services:

- 1) Information
- 2) Assistance
- 3) Individual Counseling/In Home Training
- 4) Respite Services
- 5) Supplemental Service

These types of services, access to support groups, etc. are further delineated into eligible groups:

- Those over Age 18 caring for those Age 60+
- Those over Age 18 caring for anyone with Alzheimer’s & related impairment
- Those over Age 55 who care for Children
- And those over Age 18 who care for those Ages 18 – 59 with a disability

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) – estimates that there are 30 to 38 million adult caregivers. These caregivers spend 28 hours per week providing care or 1080 hours per year. The amount of money spent on caregiving is estimated to be between \$167 and \$350 billion per year. 1/5 or 19% of the workforce is caregivers.

AoA is partnering with other Federal Agencies and Outside Entities to hold a series of satellite broadcasts on care giving. The next broadcast is September 17th and is Titled “On Innovative Employer Care Giving Programs”.

The following employers will discuss their caregiving programs during the broadcast:

1) Jim O’Hare from Northrop Grumman – Incorporating caregiving within existing Employer Assistance Programs (EAP’s);

2) AARP & Dept of Agriculture – “Prepare To Care” an initiative to identify those likely to become caregivers and educate them regarding the issues involved in advance of their assuming the role. This is taking place at the community level;

- 3) Intel – Impact of their Legacy Health Systems program – A training program to help prepare employees for the everyday stress of caregiving;
- 4) St. Andrews Resources for Seniors (MO) – regarding their Grant from the federal government to develop “caring workplace” initiative

To register for the satellite broadcast of “Innovative Employer Caregiving Programs” on September 17th, please visit www.blsmeetings.net/caregivers

Our next conference call will be on Thursday September 11th and will be on the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program and Redeeming and Transferring Coverage

Matthew J. Sonduck

Executive Assistant / Public Policy Assistant
Public Policy Department
National Business Group on Health
50 F Street, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 585-1826
Fax: (202) 628-9244
sonduck@businessgrouphealth.org
www.businessgrouphealth.org

Creative Health Benefits Solutions for Today, Strong Policy for Tomorrow

22nd Annual National Conference on Health, Productivity and Human Capital - San Diego, CA - December 8-10, 2008

On-line registration is now open. Early registration discounts are available through November 8 and discounts are also offered for multiple member attendees from the same company. Please [Click here for secure on-line registration](#)