

Business Group on Health

Driving Change Together

REGIONAL MEETING INSIGHTS

EMEA

Europe, the Middle East and Africa

March 2025



On March 4, 2025, Business Group on Health brought together benefit leaders from across EMEA to explore strategic regional considerations and best practices.

Key Takeaways:



Family-building benefits as a strategic priority:

Employers are expanding family-forming benefits to create more inclusive workplaces, support employees through key life stages and strengthen talent attraction and retention.



Women's health as a cornerstone of well-being initiatives:

Addressing women's unique health needs—from reproductive care to menopause support—is critical for fostering engagement, enhancing performance and ensuring the long-term success of workplace health programs.



Evolving mental health strategies in a shifting landscape:

With mental health playing a crucial role in workplace well-being, employers are adapting their approaches to meet emerging challenges, particularly during times of global uncertainty and change.



Risk management with public health principles:

Employers using a public health-based risk-management approach to employee health and well-being can improve outcomes and lower costs. Flexible, data-driven frameworks tailored to diverse needs drive measurable impact.

Employer Roundtable: Family-Forming in EMEA: Trends, Strategies and Impact

During this moderated roundtable, participants discussed ongoing efforts and approaches to support a growing need for comprehensive family-building and reproductive health support. In addition, the session explored market trends and strategies for addressing these diverse employee needs and fostering inclusive workplaces for employees at all stages of their family-forming journeys.

Trends explored during the session highlighted the growing expectation among employees that voluntary benefits for family formation be offered alongside core benefits such as private medical coverage.

As the average child-bearing age has shifted, employers have increasingly expanded fertility and family-building benefits to support their workforce. Common examples of these offerings in EMEA – where legally permissible – include egg freezing, in vitro fertilization (IVF), intrauterine insemination (IUI), surrogacy and adoption assistance.

Employers should keep in mind the following action steps as they consider, develop and/or roll out a comprehensive, locally relevant family-forming benefits strategy:

- **Collaborate across the organization:** Evaluating a family-forming benefit requires a multi-stakeholder approach across HR/benefits, payroll, legal, finance, risk management, operations and leadership in order to accurately review cultural, legal and operational variables at the regional and local level.
- **Provide holistic support:** Beyond financial assistance, consider offering resources such as counseling, educational workshops and flexible leave policies to support employees throughout their family-forming journey.



Fireside Chat: Building Inclusive Workplaces for Women's Health and Well-being

This conversation highlighted the importance of prioritizing women's health and well-being in the workplace and its impact on inclusion, employee attraction and retention and long-term business outcomes. The discussion examined how employers are fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for women by addressing their unique health challenges (e.g., menopause, menstrual disorders and maternity) and deploying thoughtfully designed policies and programs that account for cultural differences. Some of the key cultural considerations that were mentioned included assessment of women's sense of comfort and safety in the workplace, non-inclusive behaviors/microaggressions and travel or policy restrictions that might exist in certain countries. The discussion reinforced that there is no one-size-fits-all solution—successful initiatives require ongoing dialogue with employees to ensure that programs are both relevant and effective in practice.



Advancing Mental Health Strategies in the Workplace

Attendees explored some of the most pressing challenges impacting employee mental and emotional well-being in the region. The session covered relevant issues such as caregiver stress, limited access to providers and culturally competent care, stigma, and anxiety/fear due to social unrest and feelings of job insecurity, as well as minimal support for neurodiverse individuals. Listed below are several action steps shared during the session that support mental health needs in EMEA:

- **Create a centralized resource hub:** A centralized benefits “hub” that serves as a one-stop shop for employees in the region to access all available services can help increase awareness and engagement with local mental health supports.
- **Enable leadership training and support:** Leaders and managers are called upon to be trained in understanding how to manage staff on a day-to-day basis while remaining mindful of mental health needs.
- **Provide inclusive support:** Identify and assess the mental health needs of neurodivergent populations. Additionally, align with mental health services and care personnel who are trained in neuroinclusiveness. Tailor resources for managers of neurodivergent employees as well as for parents of neurodivergent children.



Employer Spotlight: Integrating Public Health Principles into Benefits and Well-Being

This conversation highlighted how one employer applies a risk-management lens to health and well-being, leveraging employee health data and public health concepts across key health and well-being dimensions. The company has developed a standardized framework that empowers local and country business units to take action and make targeted investments in these areas in exchange for health insurance premium discounts. The business units and their programs are assessed based on their offerings, communication strategies, implementation approaches and evaluation methods, with business units earning different levels of recognition. By incentivizing local management to implement health-promoting programs, this approach has helped reduce medical costs, enhance employee satisfaction and contribute to a healthier workforce.

Listed below are a few of the actionable approaches being leveraged by this employer that others can consider:

- **Connect and work cross-functionally:** Collaborating with compensation, benefits and health and occupational safety teams to highlight the broader value of benefits, such as expanding Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) beyond counseling to include financial and nutritional support.
- **Prioritize continuous policy improvement:** By regularly analyzing claims data, employers can identify health and well-being optimization measures for adoption by local business units. Moreover, sharing lessons learned and best practices in these efforts across the organization via an engagement platform can bolster success of initiatives.
- **Secure leadership buy-in:** Leadership support is essential to the success of this employer's initiative, as well as for other employers. One employer shared that its Chief Executive Officer in EMEA championed well-being as a cultural priority.
- **Empower local and in-country business units:** Enable business units to make decisions based on the specific needs of their employees, ensuring that health and well-being initiatives are relevant, impactful and effectively implemented at a local level.
- **Deploy a captive:** A captive approach can be used to help with implementing global initiatives (i.e., rolling out a free global check-up offering by 2026).



Final Thoughts

Each of these session topics fostered an exchange of questions and ideas among participating employers, reinforcing the value of multiemployer discussions of this nature. The meeting made clear that employers in EMEA are increasingly prioritizing holistic well-being through family-forming benefits, women's health programs, mental health support and implementation of cost-effective strategies. To advance these strategic initiatives and drive impact, many organizations are developing data-driven approaches and collaborative partnerships. Ultimately, by proactively addressing a diverse range of workforce needs in the region, employers are fostering inclusiveness that can serve to enhance employee engagement as well as retention and attraction efforts, promoting long-term workforce and business outcomes.

