It's time to re-think our approach to preventing and treating obesity. Despite decades of public and private initiatives to reduce the weight of our nation, U.S. obesity prevalence has reached an all-time high...and the stakes have never been greater for employers.

1. The problem is getting worse...for health and bottom lines.

- Overweight & obesity are increasing...
  - 66%
- While weight loss attempts are decreasing...
  - 49%

Among adults aged 20-39 years:
- 56% overweight & obesity in 1988
- 53% overweight & obesity in 2014

Obesity is causally linked to the 3 most expensive preventable conditions covered by private payers for adults < 65 years: cancer, diabetes, and osteoarthritis.

Among U.S. adults, overweight & obesity account for an estimated:
- 10-20% of all cancer cases
- 50-85% of type-II diabetes cases
- 15-30% of osteoarthritis cases

Obesity is associated with roughly the same chronic disease burden as 20 years of aging.

...and U.S. health care costs attributable to obesity now exceed those related to alcohol + smoking:
- $147B obesity
- $96B smoking
- $25B alcohol

For each BMI point above the healthy range, average medical costs increase $194-$222 per year, per employee.

76% increased risk of short-term disability among employees with obesity.

10% of all U.S. absenteeism costs are attributable to obesity.

...and it’s complicated
Did You Know?
Employers believe that stigma, embarrassment, and lack of motivation are the greatest barriers to implementing a successful weight management strategy.¹

For every pound of weight lost:
- Appetite increases about 40 cal/day u
- Metabolism decreases about 5-20 cal/day v

Metabolic changes make weight loss & maintenance difficult, but not impossible. ...and stigma

80% lose a significant amount of weight during one of more of these attempts.²

But, only 1 in 5 can maintain a 5% weight loss beyond two years through diet & exercise alone *

Solutions Exist:
Employers can help employees with investment in what works.

Average Percentage Weight Loss for Various Interventions

With just 5% weight loss: c
- Employees can see major improvements in control of diabetes, hypertension, and liver function + mobility and quality of life
- Employers can expect increases in productivity

Results in annual savings of approximately: c
- $528 for an employee with a BMI of 35
- $2,137 for an employee with a BMI of 40

Adults with obesity are 2x more likely to be ‘extremely’ or ‘very satisfied’ by weight loss medications and surgical procedures than by diet & exercise-based weight management programs q

While weight management programs can be effective, just 17% of employees with obesity find them valuable in their weight loss efforts. s

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