

TALKING TREND

Employers Can Play a Crucial Role in Promoting Health Equity

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) defines Health Equity as the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health. The goal is to provide equal opportunities for individuals to achieve their full health potential, regardless of their social position or other circumstances. Various marginalized groups face barriers to attaining good health, including Black, Latino, and Native American populations, LGBTQ+ individuals, people in poverty, those with disabilities, and rural communities.



Deloitte's Center for Health Solutions and Health Equity Institute research published in 2022, show that inequities in the U.S. health system cost billions of dollars annually, with potential costs reaching a trillion or more by 2040 if not addressed.

To address this issue, organizations such as Deloitte's Center for Health Solutions and Health Equity Institute, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum, have launched the [Global Health Equity Network](#). This initiative helps businesses understand the impact of health inequities on organizations and provides toolkits, such as the one developed by the American Heart Association, to make a business case for investing in addressing health equity.

To develop a health equity strategy, employers need to collect data to understand the specific health and social needs of their workforce. This includes expanding health assessments to include self-reported race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, and social determinants of health. Screening instruments like the one developed by the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) can help identify social needs such as housing stability, food insecurity, transportation, utility needs, and interpersonal safety.

It is more effective to prioritize a specific marginalized community and a specific health problem rather than taking a general approach to improve health equity. Employers should consider their unique challenges and opportunities to determine which populations and conditions should be first targeted. By focusing resources on well-defined problems, companies increase their chances of success. For example, Walmart prioritized maternal health outcomes based on data showing higher mortality rates among Black women, while United Airlines addressed healthcare access challenges faced by African American and Hispanic employees in the Houston area based on its own utilization trends.

Engaging a broad group of stakeholders is essential when designing solutions. Employers can involve marginalized individuals affected by the problem by partnering with employee resource groups (ERGs) and establishing community advisory boards with representatives from various community organizations and neighborhoods. This will help ensure that underrepresented perspectives are heard.

In 2022, Health Net was selected as one of nine healthcare organizations in the nation to participate in the first-ever Health Equity Accreditation Plus Pilot for all lines of business. This program provides a robust framework to improve health equity by identifying and closing care gaps and addressing social needs and risks.

Achieving health equity requires access to quality care and a holistic approach to meeting individuals' needs. Employers and their partners can promote whole-person health through innovative, multi-faceted solutions.

INDUSTRY NEWS

DMHC Releases 2022 Annual Report and Infographic



The California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) released its [2022 Annual Report](#) and [Infographic](#), highlighting the Department's activities during the year.

Among other things, the report includes an enrollment overview by market and product, COVID-19 response information, summaries from the Department's plan licensing and plan monitoring divisions, and 2022 financial oversight highlights.

HEALTH NET NEWS

Our National PPO Network for Providers Outside of California is Changing

Effective November 1, 2023 for large and small business, Health Net's national PPO network for providers outside of California will change to the Cigna HealthcareSM PPO Network.* There is no impact to Medi-Cal, Medicare, Individual & Family Commercial Business, or Oregon.

- Health Net members enrolled in PPO plans with out-of-state in-network coverage who access the Cigna Healthcare PPO Network are considered Health Net members who are simply accessing the Cigna PPO network at the in-network coverage level when outside of California.

- With over one million providers and 6,200 facilities**, the national Cigna PPO network offers a wide selection of doctors and hospitals, competitive discounts, and flexibility to support value-driven plan designs.

This change provides access to a larger national PPO network for members who seek care out of state and is expected to increase opportunities for account growth because it expands our out-of-state PPO network.

The out-of-state PPO Network project is a great example of two Centene/Health Net Strategic Pillars—[Make It Easy to Work with Us](#) and [Grow from Strength](#). Working together, its outcome will deliver better service to our group members—and greater opportunity to grow our business.

*The Cigna HealthcareSM PPO Network refers to the health care providers (doctors, hospitals, specialists) contracted as part of the Cigna Healthcare PPO for Shared Administration.

**Cigna Healthcare analysis of actual providers contracted as part of the Cigna Healthcare PPO for Shared Administration as of July 2023. Data is subject to change.

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WELLNESS

When Diets Don't Work, Eat Right Now® Offers Help



We all know that not all diets work. Some diets may help with weight loss in the short-term but aren't a good strategy for long-term weight loss. For many people, community-based weight loss programs, like Eat Right Now from Sharecare, have been found to work better.

Eat Right Now isn't a diet. It's a 28-day program designed to help members develop new and more effective eating habits. And better eating habits are shown to lead to long-term weight loss and maintaining ideal weight.

Eat Right Now offers members the tools and resources they need to help get started towards a healthier lifestyle.

Members will have access to:

- Live coaching calls with craving experts: Addresses specific needs and questions during a weekly group video meeting led by program creator, Jud Brewer, MD, PhD
- Mindful exercises and techniques: Help curb binge eating and reset relationships with food
- Daily video lessons: Short, daily videos to learn why people overeat
- Journaling: Collect, analyze and manage progress with the online journal
- Community support: Connect with other participants who are on their own weight loss journey
- Progress boosters: The Want-O-Meter and Stress Test help identify cravings and what may be causing them

It's easy for our members to get started:

1. Log into or register with [Sharecare](#)
2. Select Achieve
3. Choose Achieve and get started

To discover how Sharecare can help control weight once and for all, members can access the Eat Right Now program at [healthnet.sharecare.com](#).

IN THE COMMUNITY

Health Net's Investment to End Homelessness

Homelessness continues as a major challenge, with too many vulnerable individuals & families living on our streets. Health Net is committed to support the unsheltered, particularly our Medi-Cal members, by providing access to housing & other resources to improve their health.

- In May, Health Net announced investment with LA Care in Los Angeles County to support unhoused Medi-Cal members through grants that support housing and other services.
- In July, Health Net expanded investment of \$46 million in grant awards across 26 California counties.

These grants are made possible through California's [Housing and Homelessness Incentive Program](#) (HHIP).

Another example of our investment in essential wraparound care: Health Net's [\\$1.5 million grant earlier this year](#) to Keck School of Medicine of USC's Street Practitioner program. Its goal is to ensure there are enough clinicians & practitioners culturally sensitive & trained to meet our members where they are.


JUST FOR FUN


August is National Dog Month

The [National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center](#) predicts above normal temperatures in August for the southwest, southeast, and eastern seaboard to New England.

To ensure your dog stays safe and healthy during the hottest days of the summer, the [Animal Humane Society](#) offers these five tips:

1. Provide shade and fresh water: Make sure your dog has access to plenty of shade and refill their water frequently, as it can get hot quickly on a steamy summer day.
2. Check pavement temperature: If the pavement is too hot for your bare feet, it's also too hot for your dog's paws. Plan walks in the morning or evening when the ground is cooler, and stick to grassy areas.
3. Limit outdoor exercise: High-energy dogs may not know when to stop, so it's important to limit their exercise time and intensity. Engage them in indoor activities to burn energy in a cool environment.
4. Be cautious with short-nosed breeds: Short-nosed or snub-nosed breeds are more prone to breathing issues in hot weather. They can't cool down as efficiently, making them susceptible to heat stroke. Take extra precautions with these breeds.
5. Recognize signs of heat stroke: Excessive panting, rapid heart rate, red gums, excessive drooling, and lethargy are signs of heat stroke. If your dog shows these symptoms, bring them inside, offer cool water, and consider using cool towels or a bath. Pro tip: Skip the ice cubes. Ice and ice water can cause shock to your dog's stomach making your four-legged friend even more uncomfortable.

Remember, never leave your dog in a hot car. Even with windows open, temperatures can rise quickly, leading to dangerous conditions. It's best to leave your pet at home if you need to leave them unattended.

By following these tips, you can ensure your furry friend stays safe and cool throughout the summer season.