

COMMUNIQUÉ

To Group Insurance plan administrators
Health and wellness

Supporting women's health and wellbeing in the workplace: a necessity

Although workplace health and wellness programs have made significant progress in recent years, they do not always meet the specific needs of women. As an insurer, we're here to actively support in meeting your employees' diverse needs.

Historically, most group benefits programs were designed with a universal approach that did not prioritize the specific needs of women. Health conditions such as obesity and typically female problems such as endometriosis and menopause have not been given sufficient consideration in the development of group insurance plans.

For example, "Some plans cover hormone therapy, but not always bio-identical hormones," admits Jade Bellemare, Director, Communications and Marketing, Group Benefits and Retirement Solutions. A study conducted by Deloitte in 2023 revealed that one in ten women leaves the labour market because of untreated menopause symptoms.

Over the last 12 to 18 months, we have also seen the emergence of coverages for adoption, surrogacy and fertility treatments. In this respect, we now offer [inclusive coverages](#) for gender affirmation and family support.

The mental health challenges faced by women are also a very important issue. Women are more likely to suffer from certain mental health problems which, in many cases, lead to longer-term disability. This has consequences not only for their personal and family lives, but also for the productivity of organizations.

Concrete solutions

According to Jade Bellemare, there are practical ways of tackling health problems specific to women, such as training, education and awareness in the workplace: "We need to make employees aware of health problems that may be specific to women and develop a culture that allows them to feel comfortable talking about their problems and finding solutions with their managers."

She also stresses the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion policies, as well as resource groups specifically designed for women within organizations: "These groups are also good ways of finding out about women's needs and finding solutions," says Jade Bellemare.

Finally, to improve their support for women, organizations could, for example, offer flexible working arrangements to facilitate work-life balance. Family responsibilities still fall mainly on women, so organizations need to find a balance to enable women to fulfil their potential at work too.

Would you like to implement a more inclusive group insurance plan? Contact your Client Relationship Manager.

You, as the plan administrator, have an important role to play in informing your plan members about their group insurance plan. We also look to your support to give them all explanatory and administrative documents upon enrolment or upon request. We will help you show them where they can consult this documentation if it is not available in hard copy. If you have any questions, please feel free to consult your administrator's guide or to contact your local Account Executive or Client Relationship Manager.

This communiqué and past publications are also available on our website ia.ca.

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