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Today's Behavioral Health Problems Require a New Approach

EHIR   An EHIR Member Workshop & Survey Series

Change and "change fatigue" are contributing to a spectrum of workplace issues—from extreme stress and burnout—to rising mental health issues. Benefits leaders from organizations which are members of the Employer Health Innovation Roundtable (EHIR) are increasingly recognizing and seeking to address mental and behavioral health issues in their employee populations. Members of EHIR have identified these issues as a top priority.

EHIR partnered with meQuilibrium to hold a series of four workshops this fall with participating EHIR members to discuss the current mental and behavioral health challenges being faced by their organizations and what innovations are being put in place, or will need to be put in place, as part of a future ideal plan.

In order to facilitate developing solutions meQuilibrium conducted a set of focus group discussions to better understand the needs, obstacles, and experiences of these HR leaders. We also gathered data through a short survey instrument designed to allow us to better understand the current and desired state of mental and behavioral health issues and solutions in today's world.

THERE IS A NEW REALITY: ADDRESSING MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IS INCREASINGLY URGENT FOR EMPLOYERS.

Focus group participants recognize the increase in mental and behavioral health problems, and the resulting increased challenge to their organizations, in terms of management, productivity, and cost. **In fact, 97% of survey respondents agreed that the workplace is facing greater mental health challenges than in the past.**

EHIR Members See the Need to Address a Full Range of Mental and Behavioral Health Problems:

- 100% agree that the success of a workplace mental health solution will require highly personalized, whole-person care across the full range of problems from mild to severe and will need to include not just the employee, but also their spouse/partner and children.

- 89% see the need for a data-driven approach that would be able to predict and prescribe across a continuum of care.

- 74% indicate that their current EAP solution is not currently handling the job successfully.

- EHIR members indicate that an integrated spectrum of support options and modalities of support delivered through a variety of means will work best.

Focus Group Discussions Revealed the Issues that are Top-of-Mind:

- There is a desire to address problems earlier but identifying risk is a challenge. The scope of the problem is hidden due to lack of data. Organizations find themselves stuck in reactive mode as a result.

- Tying mental health to a business imperative is key – workplace violence and attrition is getting the attention of the C-suite. Line manager acceptance and support is critical.

- There are legal considerations which can impact management responses.

- The ability to understand behavioral and mental health needs and assess risk pre-claim is seen as essential but not yet possible for a majority of current plan designs.

High on participants' list of concerns is the identification and prevention conundrum—many are currently unable to identify risk early enough to provide preventive solutions.

While there is agreement on the essential features required to successfully improve workplace mental health, these solutions are not possible within many current health plan designs.

Participants highlighted the importance of developing the ability to help people recognize their issues and provide them with foundational tools to help themselves, ideally including an integrated digital thumbprint for employee health data and navigation.

An ideal program would:

Have an integrated (cognitive/physical) profile for each employee, which is seen as critical to strategic priorities but not possible in all current plans.

Offer digital self-management tools for employees, along with coordinated service delivery to relevant point solutions and on-going continuity to support recovery.

Addressing The Problem

As workshop participants observed, we can best address these issues in a workplace where mental health is not stigmatized, and where mental and physical health are viewed holistically. First is the ability to accurately predict risk upstream of acute issues, and intelligently route employees to appropriate supportive resources. This ability allows early intervention, boosts effectiveness of subsequent solutions, and reduces expenditures on false-positive risks. Second, a digital platform that can effectively identify problems in a safe, private and scalable manner. Third, an ideal solution will provide intelligent routing to get employees to the best resources. Finally, C-suite and leadership support is helpful, but manager support is critical.

Survey Findings

Following are survey results for 37 respondents across the four focus groups.

Establishing the Current Baseline

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
The workplace is facing a greater mental health challenge than previously.	62%	35%	3%	0%
The success of a workplace mental health solution begins with broad-based, coordinated communication about the problem.	50%	39%	11%	0%
The stigma about mental health is a major part of the problem.	68%	27%	5%	0%
The success of a workplace mental health solution will require highly personalized, whole person care across the full-range of problems from mild to severe.	70%	30%	0%	0%
The C-Suite recognizes mental health as a business problem and priority.	28%	44%	25%	3%
Most programs are focused on offering a collection of solutions without coordination across the continuum of care from prevention to treatment.	36%	54%	11%	0%
A data-driven program with predictive and prescriptive capabilities to identify those at risk, recommend the right solutions and track improvement is a critical component to a continuum of care.	35%	89%	0%	0%

Assessment of the Current State

22%	My organization has a plan to design a coordinated continuum of care to meet employee needs from prevention to treatment to measuring improvement.
67%	My organization has partially implemented the plan.
0%	My organization has fully implemented the plan.
11%	No plans to design coordinated continuum of care.

Building the Future of Workplace Behavioral Health

	Highly relevant to our strategic priorities	Not relevant to our priorities	Relevant but not possible with current plan design	Currently and sufficiently in place
The ability to assess risk pre-claim.	**56%**	12%	32%	0%
A smart digital assessment tool that continues to learn and provides up to date predictive, prescriptive, and improvement metrics.	**64%**	9%	27%	0%
Create a digital footprint of each employee for smart handoffs to clinicians, to maximize efficacy, efficiency and impact.	**63%**	9%	26%	3%

Building the Future of Workplace Behavioral Health

	Highly relevant to our strategic priorities	Not relevant to our priorities	Relevant but not possible with current plan design	Currently and sufficiently in place
Provide on-going engagement, continuity of interaction with self-management tools to support recovery.	85%	0%	15%	0%
The integration of cognitive/emotional wellbeing data with physical wellbeing.	88%	0%	12%	0%
Coordinated navigation — within a large, global network of available professionals complemented by telephonic and video counseling resources.	64%	0%	24%	12%
Coordinated service delivery—to relevant digital point solutions and programs where appropriate.	76%	3%	18%	3%
All leaders in the organization are advocates for addressing mental health issues.	66%	6%	25%	3%

How meQuilibrium Can Help

In this study conducted in collaboration with EHIR, we've taken a hard look at the rising mental and behavioral health challenges in the workplace and what employers can do to build a resilient workforce that is emotionally strong, suffers less, and can rebound after a setback.

The good news is that resilience can be learned. The skills of emotion control, empathy, and problem-solving, as well as managing frustration, negativity, and communication, can be built and habituated. meQuilibrium can help identify employees who are struggling with these issues, help equip them with the skills to handle problems before they become serious, and help your company connect employees with the assistance and benefits programs you already have in place to support them in the moment of need.

About meQuilibrium

meQuilibrium is the engagement, performance, and wellbeing solution that harnesses behavioral psychology, AI, predictive analytics and neuroscience to help innovative businesses build workforce potential. By unlocking the power of resilient people and teams, our customers more successfully navigate even the most turbulent of times. Powered by data-driven insights, our solution uses a clinically-validated assessment and robust benchmarking to measure resilience and create personalized upskilling programs, while providing employers with unique cognitive risk and behavioral health data about their workforce.

Learn More: www.meQuilibrium.com

About EHIR:

The Employer Health Innovation Roundtable (EHIR) is a coalition of the largest and most progressive employers collectively representing over 8M employees with a shared mission to accelerate the adoption of innovation for the sake of improving employee health, wellness and productivity and drive impact through action. We run a semi-annual process and host a series of private Roundtable events each Spring and Fall where we convene our members to share learnings and collectively review and evaluate the most promising emerging solutions for pilot opportunities. We are an action-oriented, private group of forward-thinking benefits leaders built by employers for employers.

EHIR grew out of a need for objective support in identifying and assessing new solutions and their impact on employee health. Through our collaborative model, EHIR has been providing a streamlined innovation process and valuable insights to leading employers for over 5 years. Our members find unique value in EHIR's role as an objective innovation filter and resource as well as in the opportunity to share learnings and best practices with an intimate group of highly engaged peers.

Learn More: www.EHIR.com

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