

# *Looking to Squeeze More From Your Benefit Plan? Engage!*

Benefits and wellness offerings have come a long way in the last decade. Employers are presented with a wide array of promising offerings and are tasked with selecting the most valuable for their employee population. While this can be a significant challenge, it's not the only one, as employees are then tasked with studying plan options to determine the best plan for them and their families.

"The reason for the problem is nothing new: Benefits are complex and confusing, and communication isn't always prioritized," said Mike Thompson, president and CEO of National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions. <sup>1</sup>

Often the employee's first step when health issues arise is going to their HR department to assist in their care pathway direction, so it becomes of significant interest to the HR team to make sure they are guiding them to the most high-quality care for each disease space. In fact, a recent study, by The Standard, shows the benefit of employees working with their HR department. Those employees who worked with HR and received communications from their employer returned to work 44% faster!<sup>2</sup>

It was noted in a recent study conducted by Employee Benefit News that 'Health benefits and PTO' outweigh the following in terms of contributing to their feelings of engagement at work: rewards for good work, office culture, recognition and team outings. This speaks highly to the employer that selecting and directing their population to quality offerings and care is highly beneficial.

The driving question on many employers' minds is how to increase engagement and education of benefits. There is not a one size fits all approach to getting employees engaged and appropriately utilizing their benefits, but research shows when employees are most engaged and familiar with their plans and offerings, it drives down claims costs, increases job satisfaction, and maximizes employees to their potential.

"There's more to engagement than letting employees know certain benefits exist. It's also about designing them in such a way that employees are able to use them."<sup>3</sup>

Early intervention through education is shown to drive the best results from a cost savings perspective, while also improving quality of life for the employee. Guiding the member to the right place by proactively providing a roadmap to high performance provider groups, or 'centers of excellence' like the

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<sup>1</sup> Views: Why benefits engagement is employer's biggest problem. Kathryn Mayer, Employee Benefit News, May 14, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> The Standard's "Employee Disability Leave Study", August 2018

<sup>3</sup> Views: Why benefits engagement is employer's biggest problem. Kathryn Mayer, Employee Benefit News, May 14, 2018.

Mayo Clinic, provides the highest return on investment. The 2018 Consumer Health Mindset found that 70% of employees surveyed would value a medical plan guidance tool.<sup>4</sup>

Progressive companies are getting creative using the digital platform to showcase educational videos, provide company-led wellness programs, offer 24-hour telemedicine services, and kick off goal-oriented team activities to reach their employee populations in an impactful way. The success has come when they *regularly* stay in front of the population through education and activities that promote prevention, early intervention, and whole person well-being. This is often accomplished by providing this information proactively at open enrollment and throughout the year.

When designing your wellness and engagement plan for the year, it is recommended to use focused, content specific mediums. Remember, one size does not fit all, so vary your content and delivery vehicles to reach the widest audience and to have the greatest impact!

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Airrosti Rehab Centers (Airrosti), headquartered in San Antonio, Texas is an outcome-based healthcare group of musculoskeletal specialists delivering high quality, patient-centered care through a consistent and evidence-based care pathway. Airrosti providers address one of the highest cost and fastest growing healthcare categories for employers, payors and individuals – musculoskeletal injuries and conditions. Airrosti's focus on rapidly resolving pain and injuries results in consistently exceptional patient reported outcomes and member experience. As of March 2018, Airrosti has more than 200 practice locations across Virginia, Texas, Ohio, Washington and Illinois.

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<sup>4</sup> 2018 Consumer Health Mindset Study. Kantar Consulting, National Business Group on Health, Alight. [Alight.com/consumerhealthmindset2018](http://Alight.com/consumerhealthmindset2018)