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Texas Employers Concerned about Impact and Costs of Depression in the Workplace

Texas Business Group on Health helping employers develop strategies for diagnosis and treatment

DALLAS –Jan. 24, 2017 – Ninety percent of employers believe depression has a definite impact on both the employer and their employees per a new statewide survey of benefit and human resource managers from the non-profit [Texas Business Group on Health](#) (TBGH). The poll examined Texas employers' policies and health benefits for supporting employees with depression and identified the challenges of facilitating awareness and access to appropriate treatment.

The survey of more than 135 mostly mid- and large-size Texas employers was conducted in August 2016 in partnership with the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI) with support of the Dallas-Fort Worth Business Group on Health, the Houston Business Coalition on Health, Mental Health America of Greater Houston and Texas Association of Business.

“Depression is a serious and treatable condition that takes a heavy toll on families, employers and communities,” said Marianne Fazen, TBGH president and CEO. “This notable research shows that even employers with broad benefits programs are looking for strategies to connect the components of their health benefits, time-off policies and communication channels that improve their overall effectiveness. Texas employers recognize the devastating impact of depression and are making strides to remove the stigma of this treatable condition and facilitate early diagnosis through better access to affordable, appropriate, coordinated care.”

Additional survey findings:

- More than 80% believe that the impact of depression in the workplace is moderate to significant.
- The three leading ways that untreated depression impacts employers are on productivity, absenteeism and morale.
- Nine out of ten employers offer traditional health benefits and employee assistance programs for treatment of depression. Less common benefits for depression include paid time off, mental health management programs, and carved-out mental health benefits.
- Forty-five percent of respondents said the most significant barrier that prevents timely and effective treatment of depression is lack of awareness about symptoms and treatment options.
- The most common strategies, reported by about half of the surveyed employers, to improve awareness and access to depression treatment include online coaching, mental health education and depression-related educational materials and seminars.
- Nearly all (90%) of the benefits and human resource managers who expressed an opinion believe that their executive leadership team would support company-led efforts to improve the availability, affordability, and quality of care for depression.

The TBGH Depression in the Workplace Executive Summary Report is available on TBGH’s website: http://tbgh.org/documents/TBGH_Depression_in_the_Workplace.pdf.

This survey illustrates the need and the desire among Texas employers for healthcare systems and communications that promote integrated, value-based treatment of depression. TBGH and MMHPI are cooperating to support such efforts with educational resources, actionable tools and strategies for employers, and employer-focused demonstration projects.

In addition to MMHPI’s work that addresses systemic improvements in mental health care, the non-profit Institute sponsors an “It’s okay to say” campaign that provides free assistance to organizations seeking to remove the stigma from conversations about mental health. Information is available at www.okaytosay.org.

“Most people with depression do not get care, because too often they do not ask for help,” said Andy Keller, PhD, MMHPI Chief Executive Officer. “Complex illnesses of any type require bold conversations and growing awareness to help people get the help that they need. When people have untreated depression, their families, organizations, and communities suffer. Employers not only can facilitate access to timely and appropriate care for depression, they also can influence the systems that provide this care by demanding improved integration and accountability.”

About the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that supports the implementation of policies and programs that help Texans obtain effective, efficient mental health care when and where they need it. The Institute’s vision is for Texas to be the national leader in treating people with mental health needs. For more information about the Meadows Institute, please visit texasstateofmind.org.

About the Texas Business Group on Health

The Texas Business Group on Health (TBGH), founded in 1985, is a non-profit employer-led coalition dedicated to promoting healthcare innovation, accountability, quality, and value in Texas communities. TBGH serves as a valuable resource for Texas employers in value-based benefits design and value-driven healthcare purchasing. TBGH also advocates employer interests in state healthcare legislation and policy development. For additional information, visit www.tbgh.org.

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