

Employee health goes beyond standard health benefits

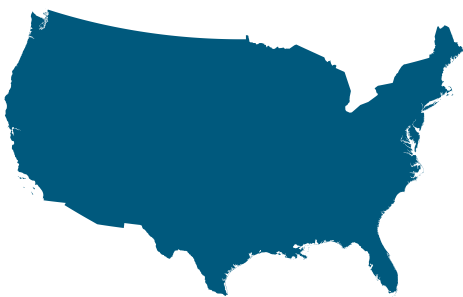


As healthcare technology advances, research indicates that an individual's health is comprised of more than just his or her actions and genetics. Social determinants of health have a significant impact on development and the long-term health of individuals.² Public health organizations and healthcare providers have been leveraging this concept to empower better health in communities, but there's a key player in healthcare that needs to shift its focus: employers.

With employees spending a large amount of time spent at work, neglecting to consider the workplace creates a blind spot in population health.⁵ Many aspects of a career, including the social environment, income, prestige, and stress, all play a factor in one's health.⁵

What are social determinants of health?

Social determinants of health are conditions in the environment in which people live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.¹



87% of full-time workers in the US have access to medical care benefits through their employer.³



On average, full-time employees spend more than one-third of each day, five days a week, at their workplace.⁴



\$36.4 billion is lost each year from employee absences related to chronic disease and unhealthy behaviors.³

Social determinants of health: at a glance



Economic stability: 4.8% of Americans fail to obtain medical care due to cost barriers.⁶



Education: By age 25, adults without a high school diploma are expected to die 9 years earlier than those with a diploma.⁷



Physical environment: Transportation and distance to healthy food options impact the health of low-income and rural communities.⁸



Social support: The stress of social isolation can lead to premature cognitive decline, chronic disease, and premature death.⁷



Access to healthcare: The ratio of physicians per 100,000 people ranges from 54.0 to 115.9 per state, meaning that the state someone lives in can have a significant impact to the availability of care.⁷

What should employers do to address social determinants of health?

By focusing on creating a culture of health, employers can positively affect social determinants of health. Examples include⁹:

- Ensuring all workers are paid a living wage for their geographic location
- Improving access to healthcare by offering yearly preventive screenings and connection to in-network primary care
- Focusing on clinically-based services that help reduce healthcare spending for both employees and employers
- Partnering with vendors who can help connect the right employees into the right care
- Creating policies that allow employees to take time away from work for health-related issues without fear of losing their job
- Subsidizing healthy food options and addressing food security through a workplace food bank
- Selecting health plan providers that focus on the well-being of the communities where employees live
- Educating people managers on social determinants of health and how they can affect workplace performance

Population health solutions from Quest Diagnostics can help you foster a culture of health at your organization. For more information, visit [QuestForHealth.com](https://www.questforhealth.com) or email PopulationHealth@QuestDiagnostics.com.

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