



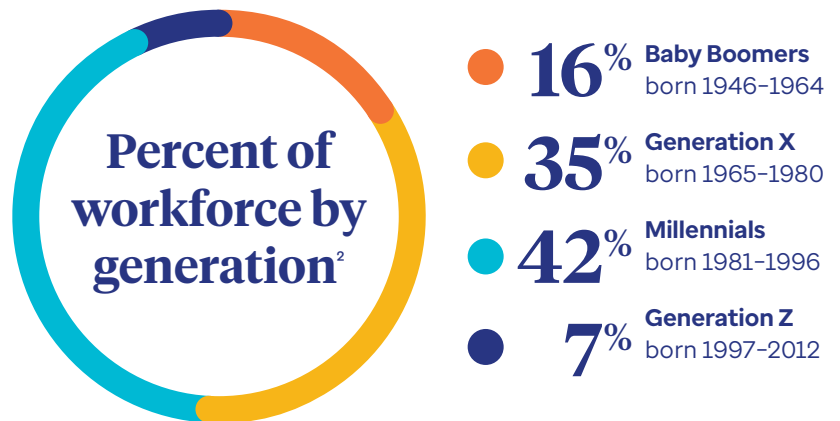
Today's workforce is aging — what that means for employers

Employers are designing benefit packages that accommodate aging employees who are staying in the workforce longer.

Over the past several decades, employees have increasingly stayed in the workforce later in life. Today's average age of retirement is 61, up from 57 in 1991.¹ This is often attributed to longer life expectancy and decreasing financial security.¹

Today's workforce is truly **multigenerational**, with Baby Boomers, Generation X (Gen X) and Millennials currently making up 93% of U.S. employees.² By 2030, all Baby Boomers will be 65 years or older — and while some may still be working, the majority of the remaining workforce will be Millennials.

Despite being recognized as one of the smallest generations overall, Gen Xers make up 35% of employees and will be 50–65 years old in 2030.



Here are 5 considerations employers should keep in mind to accommodate an aging workforce when designing their health benefit strategies:

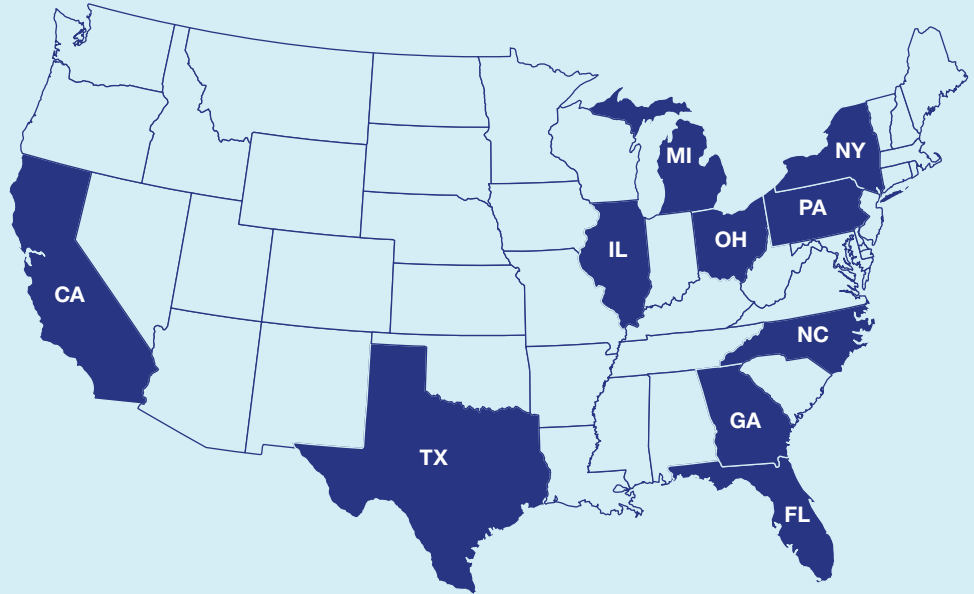
- 1 Providing care management programs to address the increased risk of chronic and complex conditions
- 2 Ensuring behavioral health benefits are designed to meet the needs of employees as they navigate different life stages
- 3 Offering benefits that address broader women's health* needs, beyond just maternity health
- 4 Supporting the "Sandwich Generation" as they balance caring for their children and their parents
- 5 Promoting employee well-being to help people live longer, healthier lives

*Women's health" is a broader term used to describe conditions, services or supportive programs and resources, not to describe those supported. UnitedHealthcare provides supportive resources for all eligible individuals, regardless of gender identity.

continued

55M+

Americans are age 65 or older, and half live in these 10 states³



1 Providing care management programs

Many health issues can disproportionately affect older adults, including chronic disease. In fact, nearly 95% of adults age 60 and older have at least 1 chronic condition, and 80% have 2 or more.⁴ These diseases can be costly for employers, with cancer and neoplasms, musculoskeletal conditions and circulatory disorders **among the top 3 health care cost drivers** for employers.⁵

Additionally, the risk of developing metabolic conditions, such as hypertension, obesity and diabetes, was found to increase 51% for adults aged 40–45.⁶ Since most Millennials will enter these years soon if they haven't already, it's critical for employers to proactively help their employees prevent and manage these types of conditions.

Designing a plan with strong **care management and clinical programs** can help employees get the care they need while managing costs.

For example, the Cancer Support Program from UnitedHealthcare takes a thorough approach to helping employees manage cancer. Members are assigned an oncology nurse as their primary contact for a broader care team, which can include medical directors and social workers experienced with oncology treatments and specialty pharmacies. This team approach can help employees access quality, lower-cost **sites of care**. Having a broader picture may also help proactively close gaps in care and lead to better outcomes.

≈95%

of adults age 60+
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51%

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adults aged 40–45⁶



2 Ensuring behavioral health benefits are designed to help employees in different life stages

Another area of concern is the increased **need for behavioral health care services**. As employees age, experiences during different life stages can impact mental health, such as developing a serious or chronic disease, navigating menopause or losing a loved one.

When an employee is experiencing poor mental health, the impact isn't contained to their personal sphere. It may lead to increased absenteeism, reduced productivity and possibly lower employee morale as co-workers take notice.⁷

Employers should include benefits that offer a variety of access points and support that works to guide employees to the appropriate level of care. For example, without guided navigation, an employee experiencing anxiety may seek out a therapist when a low-acuity resource, such as a behavioral coach, could produce a similar outcome at no additional cost to the employee.

Behavioral health benefits can combine a variety of different solutions, including **digital tools**, such as the **UnitedHealthcare® app** and Calm Health, a self-care app with guided programs and resources to help build life skills and better cope with stressors. Benefits may also include an **advocacy** component to help employees navigate their benefits and get the appropriate level of support.



3 Offering benefits that address broader women's health needs

In order to attract and retain top talent, employer-sponsored plans need to provide benefits that support women **throughout all of life's stages**.

"It's important for employers to better understand the full health care journey of their women employees," explains Stephanie Fehr, chief people officer for UnitedHealthcare. "Because, once they understand what support is needed at every step of that journey, they will be better equipped to design a health benefits strategy that supports those employees and helps guide them on a path to better health."

For instance, women have a higher risk of being diagnosed with certain conditions, such as thyroid disorders and cancer.⁸ Additionally, women typically experience the symptoms of **menopause** – hot flashes, mood changes, difficulty sleeping and more – in their 40s or 50s,⁹ often spanning 7-14 years.¹⁰ Without support, women employees experiencing these symptoms may have more sick days and lowered productivity.⁹

As such, employers may want to consider a carrier that understands women's health and offers care options to support their needs. To help meet those needs, UnitedHealthcare works with Maven, a comprehensive solution that delivers end-to-end support related to women's health. Maven's care model is designed to help improve health outcomes with a goal of lowering costs.

This option is available through the **UHC Hub™**, a curated network of vendors that complement UnitedHealthcare solutions, allowing employers to choose from a variety of vendors to customize their suite of health care offerings.

51 years old

average age a woman begins menopause, with some experiencing symptoms starting in their early 40s⁹

4

Supporting the “Sandwich Generation” as they balance caring for their children and parents

The “Sandwich Generation,” which refers to adults in their 30s–50s who care for their parents and children, has its own unique health care needs. Spanning both the Gen X and Millennial generations, the emergence of the “Sandwich Generation” is due in part to longer life expectancies from improved working conditions, the reduction in smoking rates and improved health care.¹¹

In fact, 78% of Millennials and 74% of Gen Xers identify themselves as caregivers.¹² This dual caregiving responsibility has the potential to lead to increased stress, reduced time for self-care, financial strain and conflicts between work and family obligations. Employers who recognize and support employees in this situation may help foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

There are several ways employers can support caregivers, starting with more flexible work schedules to accommodate their children’s school and after-school activities or for taking parents to medical appointments.

From a benefits standpoint, offering **financial wellness resources** may help relieve the dual financial strain of raising children and ensuring parents have what they need. These resources can include 1-on-1 coaching, budget and cash management tools and financial education sessions.

“Financial stress and economic hardships impact the overall health and well-being of employees,” explains Tom Wiffler, chief executive officer for UnitedHealthcare Specialty Benefits. “Employers that include financial wellness programs in their health plan demonstrate a commitment to achieving whole-person health.”

Childcare and eldercare benefits can also provide employees with valuable information and resources to help them navigate the challenges of finding care for an aging parent or a child. For instance, Cleo is a health care services provider that supports all stages of family life through a digital platform that is backed by health experts and care specialists. At UnitedHealthcare, this resource and others are available through the UHC Hub.



“Financial stress and economic hardships impact the overall health and well-being of employees. Employers that include financial wellness programs in their health plan demonstrate a commitment to achieving whole-person health.”

Tom Wiffler

Chief Executive Officer
UnitedHealthcare Specialty Benefits



5

Promoting employee well-being to help people live longer, healthier lives

Employers who focus on a whole-person health approach can give employees the added advantage of prevention and overall well-being. No matter the age of an employee, benefits that offer \$0 or low-cost preventive care and wellness visits can help identify potential health issues.

Employers can also offer wellness programs that encourage healthy living, such as fitness classes, nutrition counseling and smoking cessation programs to help prevent chronic diseases with risk factors tied to eating habits, physical activity levels and substance use.

Many of these programs are designed as reward-based programs that offer cash, premium discounts and even points for purchasing goods and services.



The aging U.S. workforce presents both challenges and opportunities for employers. By understanding the changing demographics and needs of each generation, employers can take a thoughtful approach to developing a benefits package that works to attract, retain and support a more productive and diverse workforce.

Learn more

Contact your broker, consultant or UnitedHealthcare representative or visit uhc.com/broker-consultant and uhc.com/employer

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¹ Jones, J. More in U.S. Retiring, or Planning to Retire, Later. Gallup, July 22, 2022. Available: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/394943/retiring-planning-retire-later.aspx>.

² 2 Percent of workforce by generation according to UnitedHealthcare Book of Business Membership.

³ Kilduff, Lillian. Which U.S. States Have the Oldest Populations? Population Reference Bureau, Dec. 22, 2021. Available: <https://www.prb.org/resources/which-us-states-are-the-oldest/>.

⁴ The Top 10 Most Common Chronic Conditions in Older Adults. National Council on Aging, April 24, 2024. Available: <https://www.ncoa.org/article/the-top-10-most-common-chronic-conditions-in-older-adults>.

⁵ UnitedHealthcare Employer & Individual book of business data, Dec. 2023. Excludes Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

⁶ Based on UnitedHealthcare Book of Business data from October 2021 to September 2023.

⁷ The Behavioral Health Care Workforce. National Institute for Health Care Management, June 8, 2023. Available: <https://nihcm.org/publications/the-behavioral-health-care-workforce-shortages-solutions>. Accessed: May 15, 2024.

⁸ UnitedHealthcare National Account Book of Business. Based on Claims Incurred between October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022, and paid through November 30, 2022.

⁹ Impact of Menopausal Symptoms on Work: Findings from Women in the Health and Employment after Fifty (HEAF) Study. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Jan. 2023. Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9819903>.

¹⁰ What Is Menopause? National Institute on Aging. Available: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/menopause/what-menopause>. Accessed: May 28, 2024.

¹¹ Four ways employers can ease weight on the sandwich generation. Reward & Employee Benefits Association, Nov. 21, 2022. Available: <https://reba.global/resource/four-ways-employers-can-help-ease-pressure-on-sandwich-generation-wellbeing-care-for-carers.html>.

¹² Kahn, M. & Consterdine, P. Smart personalization: Providing employee benefits for every generation. Mercer. Available: <https://www.mercer.com/insights/total-rewards/employee-wellbeing/smart-personalization-providing-employee-benefits-for-every-generation/>. Accessed: May 16, 2024.

Cancer Support Program is a program, not insurance. Availability may vary on a location-by-location basis and is subject to change with written notice. UnitedHealthcare does not guarantee availability of programs in all service areas and provider participation may vary. Certain items may be excluded from coverage and other requirements or restrictions may apply. Please check with your UnitedHealthcare representative.

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