

RESEARCH REVIEW

Keeping you up to date with the latest peer-reviewed research on workforce health and productivity

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March 10, 2020

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Receipt of Disability Benefits Increases Family Caregiving

[*Journal of Health Economics*](#)

Not all work-disabled adults receive disability insurance benefits. Researchers found that recipients of disability benefits got more help with daily activities from their adult children than did disabled non-recipients. Receipt of benefits also increased the likelihood that adult children were paid for their help, easing some of the financial burden of caregiving. The findings suggest that the value of disability benefits extends beyond income protection for recipients, providing advantages for family members as well.

+ Stay tuned for new research on the effects of caregiving: IBI is conducting [research](#) that will look into the scope of employees' caregiving responsibilities and the link to their health, absence, and financial well-being, as well as the operational and productivity impacts for employers.

Access to Care Declined in 2017 After Three Years of Gains

[Health Affairs](#)

The proportion of people without insurance fell by 7.1 percentage points between 2013-2016. The largest gains in access to care were seen among households in the lowest income bracket. In 2017, uninsurance rates increased by 1.7 percentage points, eliminating 17% of the early gains in access since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. In addition, more people reported avoiding healthcare because of costs in 2017—particularly in states that did not expand Medicaid.

+ What does this mean for businesses? Last year, IBI [released a report](#) that found that one in three lower-income employees experience a need for health care they cannot afford which could increase their sick days by nearly 70%. More than half of uninsured lower-income employees experience a cost-related barrier compared to about one-fifth of those insured. Employees should consider developing a data-driven view of unmet need for care to help focus benefit strategies on employees most at risk of barriers to care and illness-related lost work time.

Obesity-Related Healthcare, Disability, Absenteeism Costs Differ by Industry

[JOEM](#)

A study found that employees in the government/education/religious services industries incurred the highest obesity-related healthcare costs compared to other industries such as retail stores, consumer goods, and finance and insurance industries. Employees with obesity in the healthcare industry often had the lowest levels of healthcare costs, absenteeism, and disability costs across the board.

+ Prevalence of Obesity will Continue to Increase: A [previously reviewed](#) New England Journal of Medicine [study](#) projects that by 2030 nearly 1 in 2 adults (48.9%) will have obesity. The [2017-2018 prevalence](#) of obesity in adults is 42.4%.

Wage Earnings for Injured Workers Have Not Returned to Pre-Recession Levels

[RAND](#)

Employment and earnings are key indicators of work wellbeing after workplace injury. Researchers reviewed California's injured workers in 2016-2017 and compared to trends pre-and post-recession. They found that while there were modest gains in income—especially for workers with indemnity payments, cumulative trauma and permanent disability—earnings were still lower than pre-recession levels. Employees with permanent partial disability benefits had the largest declines in relative earnings during the Great Recession but started seeing improvements beginning in 2014.

Supplementing Integrated Care Program with a Work-Focused Counselling Program for Depression Shown to be Effective

[JAMA Network Open](#)

A randomized control trial found that a telephone-based work intervention combined with integrated care (IC) was more effective than IC alone at improving work productivity among veterans with depression. Compared to the IC control group, the intervention group significantly improved at-work productivity by 1.7 percentage points and effects were present four months later. In addition, the IC control group lost significantly more work hours than the intervention group. The cost per participating patient was \$691 and the return on investment was 160%.

Periodontal Disease has Impact on Presenteeism in Japanese Workers

[JOEM](#)

About three percent of Japanese workers reported missing work, and about seven percent reported having trouble working (i.e., presenteeism), due to oral health problems. Participants with periodontitis—inflammation of the gums and supporting structures of the teeth—were at twice the risk of presenteeism than other employees, even after controlling for factors such as age, sex, smoking, industry and work schedules.



IBI is the leading not-for-profit organization focused on the connections among workforce health, wellbeing, medical care, absence and productivity. We provide research, benchmarking, education and the tools to help guide sound decisions in

workforce health investments. For more information, please visit www.ibiweb.org.

Upcoming Events

March 17: [*Webinar: Integrating Employer and Patient-Centered Approaches to Benefit Design & Delivery*](#)

April 9: [*Webinar: The Business Value of Patient-Provider Relationships*](#)

April 22: [*PBGH & IBI Regional Event: Biosimilars: The Next Frontier*](#)

September 15-16: [*Conference: IBI/Conference Board Health and Productivity Forum*](#)

