

Making Menopause Part of Your DEI Strategy: 5 Facts Every Employer Should Know

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For the first time, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) has highlighted menopause-related benefits in its [2024 employee benefits survey](#). This milestone shines a light on a critical yet overlooked issue: Only 17% of employers offer menopause support like counseling and education, even though many women are reaching senior leadership positions during this stage of life. As of 2023, women comprise [41.9% of the global workforce](#). However, only 32.2% hold senior leadership roles—and this percentage drops to just [10.4% in Fortune 500 companies](#). Pam Smith offers her insight alongside colleague Harrison Newman.

With more than one in five women considering quitting due to menopause symptoms—ranging from brain fog and hot flashes to fatigue, mood swings, anxiety and sleep disruption—employers must offer assistance to prevent a hidden talent drain, where experienced, capable employees leave the workforce due to unmanaged symptoms.

Here are five facts about menopause that underscore why inclusive midlife health benefits should be a cornerstone of every employer's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategy.

1. Hormone Therapy Is Effective—Employers Must Ensure Coverage

Menopause symptoms can be severe, affecting both performance and well-being. Hormone therapy, once stigmatized, is now recognized as one of the [most effective treatments](#) for hot flashes, night sweats and other menopause symptoms.

Employers should ensure their benefits packages offer comprehensive menopause-related treatments, including hormone therapy, physical therapy for pelvic floor issues and access to menopause specialists. Lack of access to these treatments compounds the workplace difficulties women face, but with proper support, their productivity and engagement can soar.

2. Perimenopause Starts Early—Proactive Education Is Essential

Women don't simply enter menopause overnight. Many begin experiencing perimenopause symptoms as early as their 30s, well before they consider slowing down in their careers. Unfortunately, most women remain undereducated in this transitional stage, which can last up to 10 years.

Employers that offer educational resources—whether through webinars, employee resource groups (ERGs) or expert consultations—empower employees to anticipate their needs and establish proactive wellness practices. These resources foster a supportive culture and boost retention, helping to keep experienced, capable employees engaged and thriving.

3. Menopause Can Last up to 14 Years—ERGs Are Critical for Support

For some, the menopause transition spans over a decade, [extending up to 14 years](#) in some cases. Since this period overlaps with prime career years, employers must address how menopause intersects with job performance and retention.

Introducing or expanding ERGs can provide safe spaces for sharing experiences and advice. Integrating these groups with other initiatives—such as parental leave or fertility support—ties menopause into a holistic approach to DEI. These groups aren't a standalone perk but should be considered a core part of your diversity package.

4. Menopause Goes Beyond Hot Flashes—Mental Health Resources Are a Must

Many people associate menopause solely with hot flashes. But the symptoms often extend to anxiety, depression, fatigue and sleep disorders, which means mental health support is just as vital as physical health benefits. Offering counseling, stress management programs or resources like [cognitive behavioral therapy](#) can help mitigate the emotional toll menopause takes.

Ensuring mental health resources are readily available—and tailoring them to menopause-specific needs—makes employees feel supported through the full spectrum of their health challenges.

5. Menopause Affects Brain Health—Flexible Work Options Should Be Standard

[Menopause affects cognitive function](#), which can lead to a temporary decline in job performance. Offering flexible work arrangements—whether through remote work, flex hours or reduced workloads—can help employees navigate this period without compromising their careers.

More than offering flexibility, employers must openly communicate that these accommodations are available and encouraged. Doing so helps reduce stigma, allowing employees to feel comfortable accessing the support they need.

The Bottom Line: A Business Case for Menopause Support

Menopause support isn't simply a nice-to-have perk—it's essential for retaining top talent. Menopause benefits are a strategic addition to your DEI strategy, making your workplace more inclusive for employees across all stages of life.

By taking proactive steps now, employers can improve retention, boost productivity and make a long-term investment in the success of their organization.

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