Effective Absence Management

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Sounds Crazy….Please get out your smartphones!

Pollev.com/morneaushepell
Let’s give it a try.....

What do you wish to have more of right now?
Your poll will show here

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Morneau Shepell Research provides insight into workplace absence

Why are employees absent?

What do employees have to say?

What do physicians think of their role?

How are organizations doing?
Research approach, methodology and validity

The survey was carefully designed to be representative of the Canadian population of employees, employers and physicians.
Employers: Absenteeism is a serious business issue that is costly to our organization

% of employers

| 81% | manage absenteeism through performance management |
| 90% | believe absenteeism is costly for their organization |

The majority of employers say that unscheduled time off is a serious or extremely serious issue for their organization.
Employers: The majority believe that illness is the main reason for absence

- Illness: 67%
- Dealing with family issues: 52%
- Because sick days are paid and people want to use them: 49%
Employees: 52% say illness was not the main reason for their most recent absence
Employees indicate a direct relationship between workplace stress and sick time

Employees who took time off for non-medical reasons

Indicated higher level of workplace stress
### Employees: Workplace stress has an impact on health, absence and retention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of employees</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>45%</strong></td>
<td>Indicate that they have <strong>thought about leaving their workplace</strong> due to workplace stress and the impact on them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>31%</strong></td>
<td>Have <strong>taken time off work</strong> because of workplace stress and the impact on them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>25%</strong></td>
<td>Indicate that they <strong>have become ill in the last 6 months</strong> due to workplace stress</td>
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</table>

Each of these responses was split by age, with employees **under 35 years** more likely to agree.
Employees: Workplace support is critical for managing the impact of stress on employee productivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of employees</th>
<th>Indicate that managing employee mental wellness is important for employee productivity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56%</td>
<td>Indicate that their organization supports mental wellness on the job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employees want their employer to address absence

3 strikes you're out and actually follow through with it

Put a limit of missed days allotted before dismissal or termination

Reward employees that regularly come to work

Get serious about things!

I'm not sure, it's a complicated issue
Psychological health and safety in the workplace is linked to lower absence and higher levels of engagement

Employees who rated their workplace more favourably on the dimensions of psychological health and safety

Indicated better workplace effectiveness
- Less absence
- Less presenteeism
- Higher engagement
Effective absence management requires an integrated approach
Do medical notes reduce unnecessary absenteeism?
Your poll will show here

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Physicians: only 5% who commented, indicated that medical notes have a value in reducing unnecessary absenteeism

I understand their desire to account for absences but do not think that the burden should fall on physicians. We can't even really vouch for their illness since we often see them once they've recovered.

Using the family doctor as police; in effect may delay RTW as patient waits until they have the note then returns to work.

These notes are a pain for all concerned.

If the workplace wants a note they should pay for it.

Truancy control is not a medical service!
Physicians: Employers need to take an active role in promoting recovery and return to work

<table>
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<th>% of physicians</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>74%</strong></td>
<td>Indicate that the biggest barrier (besides the actual medical condition) to patients returning to work is the workplace not being able to accommodate their conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>48%</strong></td>
<td>Are not comfortable providing comments on how diagnosis could impact employee performance (work limitations)</td>
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Physicians are clearly pushing back on the role we have given them, leaving employers with a challenge to effectively manage absenteeism.
**Employers: Understanding the costs of absenteeism is a challenge for most**

<table>
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<th>% of employers</th>
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<tr>
<td>64%</td>
<td>Do not monitor the cost of incidental absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56%</td>
<td>Do not know the average duration of their short-term disability claims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47%</td>
<td>Do not monitor the incidence and cost of workers’ compensation</td>
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</table>
Understand the factors that impact workplace absence

- Plan Design
- Program Administration
- Organizational Support(s)
- Organizational Culture
Integrate an absence management strategy into the operation of your business

Track and measure
You will never be able to manage an issue that is not consistently measured. You may also be at legal risk of arbitrary management without a tracking.

Solve the ‘actual’ problem
Address the root cause not the symptoms. Managing attendance only after the fact will not bring sustainable change.

Recognize
That absence is a workplace issue and not a medical issue. It requires an integrated approach with specific expertise and clear workplace roles.