

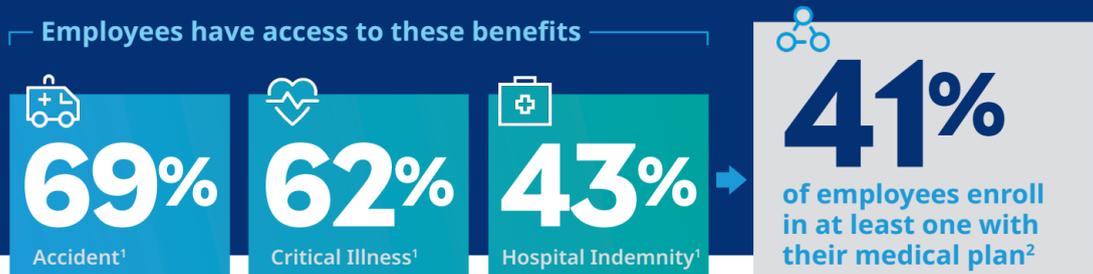
# Revitalize employee well-being

**Dynamic marketplace changes over the past two years, along with pandemic disruptions and social unrest, have shifted the needs and priorities of today's employers and employees.**

As cost pressures and worker shortages continue to drive tough total rewards decisions for employers, they are further evaluating strategies designed to deliver more value and savings back to their organizations and their employees. The latest trend evolving in the voluntary benefits space is pressing employers to offer more personal, customized lifestyle solutions that will help employees physically, emotionally and financially, which is resulting in new strategies, plan design changes and overall benefits innovation.

## Innovating Supplemental Health benefits

Supplemental health benefits have traditionally been considered "gap fillers," designed to complement core health coverage. New carriers, expanded benefit designs and bundling strategies now provide employers with innovative ways to revitalize their Supplemental Health benefits to meet the needs and circumstances of their employees.



## Today's workforce trends have led to new benefit features

### 1: Meet needs of ALL employees with equitable and inclusive benefits

The disparities and social determinants of health are not equally distributed among an employee population. As employers continue to address diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, looking beyond a one-size-fits-all solution and creating inclusive benefits is crucial.

- Wellness and preventative screenings help support risks of underrepresented populations, including:
- Sickle cell
  - Heart disease
  - Strokes
  - Cancer
  - High blood pressure



# 2.3X

higher mortality rates for Black infants than white infants<sup>3</sup>



To address the high racial disparity in infant mortality, carriers are focusing on prenatal wellness benefits that could have a positive impact on reducing infant mortality.

### 2: Invest in growing mental and emotional health needs

The pandemic has highlighted the need for better access to mental healthcare, as more people suffer from anxiety and depression. At the same time, complex mental health issues, such as addiction and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), are rising.

# 51%

Employees value a wide range of mental health benefits: Carriers are enhancing Supplemental Health benefits to align with this growing initiative

of employees state insurance coverage or programs that reduce the cost of mental health treatments would be highly or extremely valuable<sup>4</sup>

**Critical Illness** Provides a potential payout for covered mental health conditions

**Hospital Indemnity** Helps pay for covered hospital stays due to mental health or substance use



Employee is a veteran who is experiencing symptoms of PTSD  
After a PTSD diagnosis, a covered condition through his Critical Illness program, he receives a lump-sum payment

### 3: Offer customized benefits based on employee claims data

As more employers are looking to enhance benefits and the employee experience, analyzing medical claims and loss ratio data can help to directly integrate valuable covered conditions to Supplemental Health plans.

- Cancer**
- Cardiovascular disease**
- Sepsis**
- Musculoskeletal/injuries**
- Stroke**

Identified high claims over a two-year period, resulting in adding sepsis as a covered condition in the Critical Illness benefit

### 4: Add COVID-19 and other pandemic-related coverage

Pandemic-related health conditions exposed the need for additional employee coverage beyond their basic health insurance to help protect their financial security. Many carriers have added benefit features related to COVID-19, including:

- Health screening benefit provides employees with payouts for preventative tests through Accident, Critical Illness or Hospital Indemnity plans
- Daily inpatient benefit related to hospitalization
- Diagnosis of covered Critical Illness condition provides employees with a lump-sum payout



# 56%

of employers are extremely or very interested in offering employees insurance to cover costs associated with COVID-19 or future pandemics.<sup>5</sup>

## The value of collaborating with a proven partner

As the largest voluntary benefits broker in the US, Mercer leverages our relationships with 90+ industry-leading carriers in the market to customize, negotiate — and renegotiate — enhanced plan designs and underwriting terms that are not available through competitors. This allows us to offer employers and their employees greater savings and access to the most innovative solutions.



**Contact your voluntary benefits consultant to learn more about new and innovative ways refreshing your Supplemental Health benefits can help meet your employees' needs today and in the future.**

<sup>1</sup>Mercer's National Survey of Employer-Sponsored Health Plans, 2021 (National 500+); <sup>2</sup>2022 Mercer Marketplace 365+ enrollment results; <sup>3</sup>CDC, Infant Mortality Statistics from the 2018 Period Linked Birth/Infant Death Data Set, 2020; <sup>4</sup>MMB Health on Demand, 2021; <sup>5</sup>Aflac WorkForces Report 2020-2021