The Next Workplace Management Challenge:  
End-of-Life Issues

Brent Pawlecki, MD, MMM  
Corporate Medical Director  
Pitney Bowes Inc.

Health Industry Forum:  Examining End of Life Care—Princeton, NJ  
May 20, 2010

... people have come both to fear a technologically over- 
treated and protracted death and to dread the prospect of 
abandonment and untreated physical and emotional 
distress.

Workplace Management Challenges

Health Conditions

• Obesity
• Smoking
• Heart Disease
• Diabetes
• Depression
• Musculoskeletal Disorders

agenda

• Why it is an employer issue
• Components of the issue
• What employers can do to address the issue
an employer issue

1. Employees are caregivers
   – Demographic shifts
     • One in five will be 65 and older by 2030
     • Percentage of working age 18 - 64 declining

an employer issue

1. Employees are caregivers
   – Caregiver duties
     • 7 to 10 million adults care for parents from distance
     • 25% of adults provide care to another adult
     • 64% of caregivers work full or part-time
     • 1 in 8 aged 40 – 60 care for both parent and child
     • Roughly half were men
an employer issue

1. Employees are caregivers
   – Productivity & financial impact (2006 MetLife)
     • $17.1 to 33.6 billion per year
     • Workday interruption at least one hour per week
     • 60% needed to attend to some crisis
     • 2.4 percent leave workforce entirely
     • Cost for full-time employed caregiver $2,110
     • Uncaptured presenteeism costs

an employer issue

1. Employees are caregivers
   – Unprepared
     • fewer than half of baby boomers have discussed their parents’ treatment wishes in the event of terminal illness
     • only 40% have discussed their parents’ will
1. Employees are caregivers
   – Adverse health effects

an employer issue

1. Employees are caregivers
2. Unexpected health crisis for employee or partner
2. Unexpected health crisis for employee or partner
   – 627,000 working age adults die each year
   – 2007, unintentional injuries caused 120,000 deaths and 26 million disabling injuries

2. Unexpected health crisis for employee or partner
   – Undocumented end of life issues
     • Treatment decision confusion
     • Emotional burden
     • Mounting medical and disability costs
an employer issue

1. Employees are caregivers
2. Unexpected health crisis for employee or partner
3. Childhood health issues

3. Childhood health issues
   
   - 1900, 30% children did not survive to age 5
   - 1999, decreased to just 1.4%
   - Currently, 2% deaths are in children
3. Childhood health issues

– Parents are caregivers
  • Balance
    – Needs of other family members
    – Household
    – Jobs
  • Travel to specialty centers

3. Childhood health issues

– Prematurity
  • One in eight in U.S
  • Serious health conditions
  • First year medical costs 10 x greater for preterm vs. full-term
an employer issue

3. Childhood health issues
   – Death
     • Heavy emotional toll

an employer issue

1. Employees are caregivers
2. Unexpected health crisis for employee or partner
3. Childhood health issues
Discussions about end of life occur

. . . late
. . . too late
. . . or not at all.

employer example—PB

provides employees with the environment, the tools, and the motivation to enhance their health and well-being.
employer example—PB

Health Care University

1st Trimester
• Know your numbers
• Healthy habits

2nd Trimester
• Staying Healthy in a Down Economy
• Nutrition, managing stress, stop smoking, managing diabetes

3rd Trimester
• Planning for the Future
• Important health topics

Planning for the Future
• 15 minute on-line learning module
Planning for the Future

- 15 minute on-line learning module
- Workbook to organize important personal information
- Advance directives
  - Living will
  - Medical power of attorney
Planning for the Future

• 15 minute on-line learning module
• Workbook to organize important personal information
• Advance directives
• Encouragement to have discussions

Direct employees to related services
  – Legal services
  – Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
  – Financial planning
Planning for the Future

- 15 minute on-line learning module
- Workbook to organize important personal information
- Advance directives
- Encouragement to have discussions
- Direct employees to related services
- Caregiver—Work Limitations Questionnaire®

Caregiver—Work Limitations Questionnaire®

- Variation on WLQ®
- Impact of caregiving on the workforce
Caregiver—WLQ® findings

N=4,128
Past Caregiver=10.2%
Current Caregiver=18.3%

% of Caregiver Respondents in Age Groups

- 60+: 6%
- < 30: 10%
- 30-40: 18%
- 40-50: 34%
- 50-60: 32%

Individuals Receiving Care by Caregivers

- Mother/stepmother: 43%
- Father/stepfather: 8%
- Spouse/domestic partner: 14%
- Adult friend: 4%
- Adult sibling or other relative: 10%
- Child >18 years old: 4%
- Child <18 years old: 17%
Caregiver—WLQ® Summary

- 49% of caregivers are caring for 2 or more people
- The more people being cared for, the greater the toll on the caregiver
- The younger the caregiver, the greater the toll
- Burden factors include: Time Management, Physical Tasks, Mental-Interpersonal Tasks, Output tasks, At-Work Productivity Loss
- The dollar amount lost due to productivity loss = $1,845 (highest for younger caregivers $2,854)
- The higher the intensity of caregiving, the greater the productivity loss ($3,758 for the roughly 10% of employees providing “extremely heavy duty” caregiving)

Of Caregivers, Paying for Assistance with Caregiving?

- No, help wanted but can't get it 19%
- Yes, full time help 4%
- Yes, part time help 11%
- No, help not wanted 66%

employer example—PB
Caregiver—WLQ® Summary

Of Caregivers, Planning to Take a Leave of Absence from Work?

- Not Sure: 17%
- Yes: 4%
- No: 79%

employer resources

Caring Connections
- http://caringinfo.org/employer

National Business Group on Health
- Participating in the National Priorities Partnership
- Workgroup: Palliative Care and End-of-Life Care
- Resources, Glossary, Fact Sheets
- Two conferences to date
employer actions

Address components
• Encourage financial planning
• Encourage wills
• Encourage Advance Directives
• Review bereavement policies
• Long-term care policies
• EAP and counseling services

employer actions

• Recognize the issue on your human capital
• Determine the impact on your workforce
• Provide appropriate services
• Revise policies as needed
employer actions


*MetLife Mature Market Institute*,

summary

An employer issue

- Employees are caregivers
- Unexpected health crisis for employee or partner
- Childhood health issues

Employers can implement programs
Brent Pawlecki, MD, MMM
Corporate Medical Director
Pitney Bowes Inc.
brent.pawlecki@pb.com