



Industry Snapshot

Health Care

While they work to care for others, employees in the health care sector don't always prioritize their own well-being. Complicating matters is the physical and emotional toll that people in these types of roles typically take on, which may ultimately impact their ability to show up for those who depend on them – including their employers.

An analysis of industry trends and UnitedHealthcare data reveals opportunities for addressing stress and burnout and encouraging wellness and preventive care, which may help improve health and lower costs across this critical workforce.



Demographics

80% female¹

47% of employees
said long hours contributed
to burnout²

50 years old
median age of both RNs and
LPNs/LVNs as of 2024³

#1 employment sector
in the U.S., projected to employ
24.5M in 2034⁴



Key health insights

Compared to the entire UnitedHealthcare ASO book of business,⁵ employees in this sector had:

- ▲ Higher prevalence of musculoskeletal (MSK) claims, encompassing 9.5% of medical spend
- ▼ Lower rate of engagement with primary care providers (PCPs) and clinical programs; higher use of more costly quick-fix services like the ER
- ▲ Higher prevalence of maternity and NICU claims



Top health challenges⁵



Physical health

Due to the physical demands of many health care roles



Behavioral health

Due to a high-stress environment, prevalence of burnout and sometimes long, irregular schedules



Maternity/NICU

Due to predominantly female workforce

Strategies for health care employers

As the health care sector continues to manage rising patient demand, workforce challenges and increasing operational complexity, strengthening organizational stability and ensuring consistent access to quality care remains essential for sustaining performance and supporting long-term workforce resilience.



Help expand access to care – Given employees' long hours and shift work constraints, employers may want to consider on-site clinics or nurses, as well as virtual PCP and virtual specialty care to help employees fit care into their schedule.



Choose a health plan with clear upfront pricing – Featuring an app that enables members to see and compare actual copays before getting care, a plan like **Surest**[®] may encourage employees to choose higher-value, lower-cost sites of care (like urgent care instead of ER) more often.



Focus on behavioral health and burnout – In addition to a robust behavioral health benefit, consider a modernized Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and a mix of in-person and virtual behavioral health support to help employees better cope with the demanding nature of health care work. For those experiencing **lower-severity issues**, access to self-care apps like Calm Health may help them build skills to cope with stress, potentially reducing the need for higher-cost therapy.



Consider a spectrum of MSK support – With a lower rate of clinical program engagement,⁵ employees in this sector may benefit from the convenience and flexibility of digital programs like those available via UHC Hub[™] designed to help with **back, joint and chronic pain**.



Offer robust family planning and maternity support solutions – Providing benefits for fertility support solutions, doulas, neonatal resource services and more may help ensure healthier outcomes and a better experience for employees in the family-building stage of their lives.



Encourage preventive care and healthier behaviors – Up-to-date preventive care and vaccinations are important in a sector where employees are more likely to be exposed to infectious diseases. Workplace **communications** stressing the importance of preventive care and access to wellness programs designed to help participants lose weight or quit tobacco may also help employees get healthier.



Talk to your UnitedHealthcare representative, broker or consultant for more information



¹ Smith, S. and Blank, A. Healthcare Occupations: Characteristics of the Employed. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 2023. Available: [https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2023/healthcare-occupations-in-2022/home.htm#:~:text=43.8-View%20Chart%20Data,among%20physicians%20\(44%20percent\)](https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2023/healthcare-occupations-in-2022/home.htm#:~:text=43.8-View%20Chart%20Data,among%20physicians%20(44%20percent).). Accessed: Oct. 20, 2025.

² Turning burnout into growth strategies for healthcare providers. Grant Thornton, Feb. 6, 2025. Available: <https://www.grantthornton.com/insights/articles/health-care/2025/burnout-solutions-in-healthcare>. Accessed: Nov. 19, 2025.

³ The state of today's nursing workforce, in 5 charts. Advisory Board, May 19, 2025. Available: <https://www.advisory.com/daily-briefing/2025/05/05/nurse-workforce-ec>. Accessed: March 12, 2026.

⁴ Employment Projections: Employment by major industry sector. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Aug. 28, 2025. Available: <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/employment-by-major-industry-sector.htm>. Accessed: Nov. 5, 2025.

⁵ UnitedHealthcare ASO book of business, 2025.

The material provided through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is for informational purposes only. EAP staff cannot diagnose problems or suggest treatment. EAP is not a substitute for your doctor's care. Employees are encouraged to discuss with their doctor how the information provided may be right for them. Your health information is kept confidential in accordance with the law. EAP is not an insurance program and may be discontinued at any time. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action

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Certain preventive care items and services, including immunizations, are provided as specified by applicable law, including the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), with no cost-sharing to you. These services may be based on your age and other health factors. Other routine services may be covered under your plan, and some plans may require copayments, coinsurance or deductibles for these benefits. Always review your benefit plan documents to determine your specific coverage details.

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