

Leave Optimization Forum 2022 Year in Review

We leveraged our community to share top-of-mind leave policies and practices.

Crafting the right policy, along with a best-in-class employee experience, is an ongoing evolution. In 2022, Forum members posed a diverse range of questions to each other and stepped up by sharing their approaches to the following issues, including what's working and what's not.

- Backup care programs
- Communications
- Defining family
- Disability benefits and approaches
- Domestic violence leaves
- Family building
- Frontloading PTO approaches
- Global leave policies
- Holiday approaches
- Managing paid leave laws
- Menopause leaves
- Mental health days
- Parental and caregiver leaves
- Partnering with family-focused ERGs
- Pregnancy loss leaves
- PTO for non-exempt and non-benefits eligible employees
- Sabbaticals
- Travel for medical procedures
- Volunteering leaves

We also leaned on experts to understand and prepare for what's coming. Panagis Galiatsatos, MD, MHS, from Johns Hopkins joined us to discuss implications of long COVID on employers and employees, including the strong tie between COVID and mental health. In many ways, long COVID is an invisible disability that will require both physical and cognitive accommodations, as well as employer advocacy on behalf of diagnosed employees. Sedgwick also presented industry trends to keep on our radar related to 1) working from home; 2) vaccine mandates; and 3) litigation and claim trends.



GUEST PRESENTATION

Taking a Long, Hard Look at Long COVID
by John Hopkins Medicine



PARTNER PRESENTATION

Industry Trends Impacting Time Away
by Sedgwick

We aspired to wow employees with benefits that they want and need.

Offering a strong benefits package is critical to a company's brand and employee value proposition. Throughout the year, employers discussed how they position leave in their broader employee experience and benefits strategies. Accenture, Capital One, Intel, Pitney Bowes and PwC shared insightful approaches, including a focus on health management rather than disability management; the integration of leave into a new company-wide strategy to reimagine the employee experience through choice and flexibility; and leading practices from successful return-to-work approaches to monthly personal investment days for professional development or catching up on work or rest.



PARTNER PRESENTATION
Engaging Employees in Advance Care Planning
by Wellthy



BENCHMARKING
Family Benefits with a Global Twist
with Global Institute



EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT
Parental Leave and RTW
by Intel



EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT
My+ and Other Employee-Centric Benefits
by PwC



EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT
Leading on Leave
by Accenture, Capital One and Pitney Bowes



WEBINAR
Taking Caregiving from Pandemic-driven to the Future
featuring Cisco and CVS Health



NEW RESOURCE
Global Leaves Survey Results



NEW RESOURCE
Caregiving and Family Support Survey Results



UPDATED RESOURCE
Family Benefits Bundle

We made pioneering moves to integrate mental health and time away.

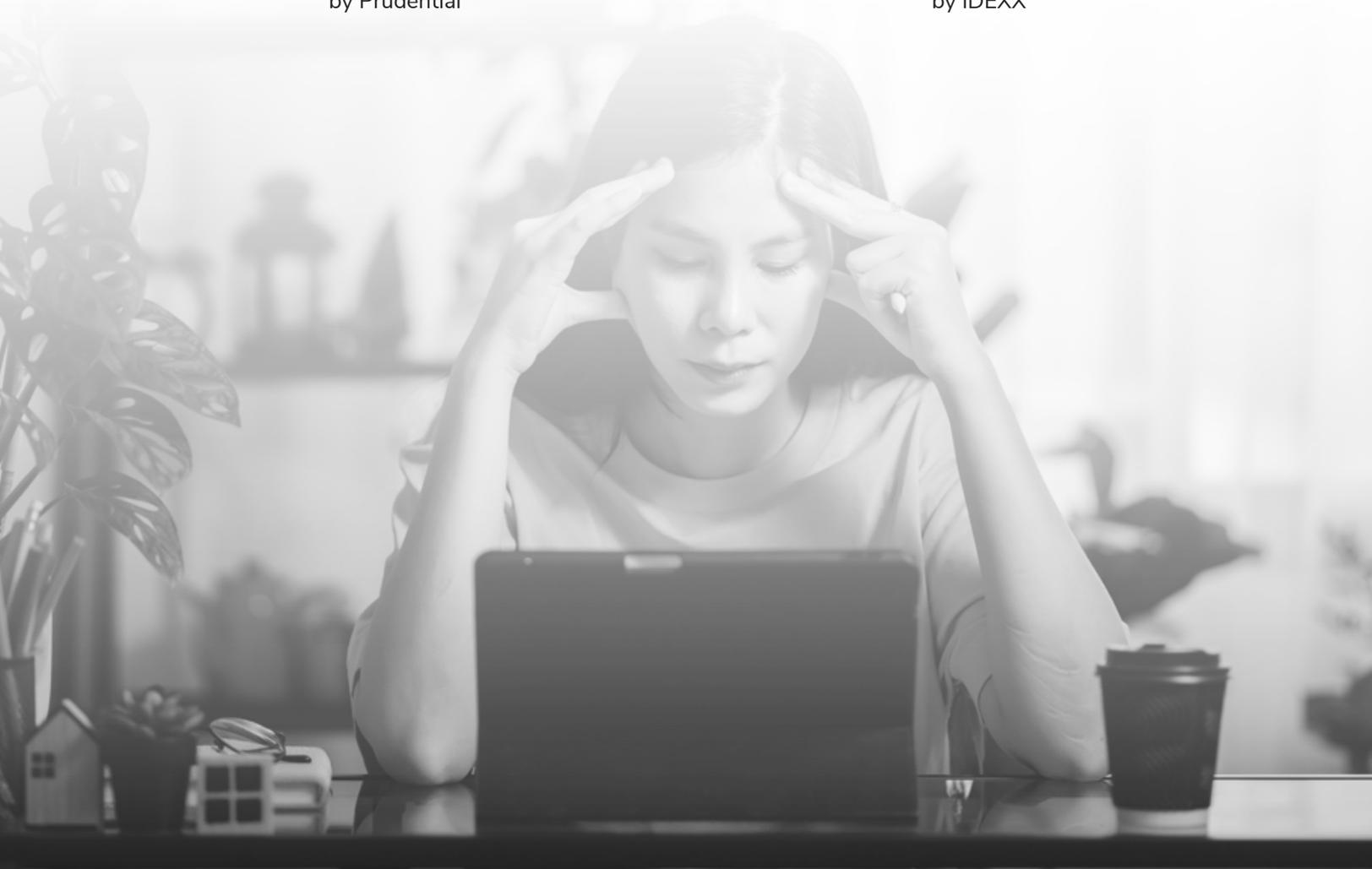
Mental health is a top priority for large employers, and our community understands time away is an integral part of addressing employee mental health needs. Prudential discussed their enterprise-wide mental health strategy and how the company is taking action on three pillars: increasing awareness, reducing stigma and increasing access. IDEXX also illuminated the value of integrating mental health, leave and disability efforts, including outcome guarantees and co-branded communications across vendors. And throughout the year, mental health found its way into various discussions with employers as they shared challenges related to high mental health disability claims and evolving approaches.



PARTNER AND EMPLOYER PRESENTATION
**Leading by Example: Inside Prudential's
Mental Health Approach**
by Prudential



EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT
**Integration Across IDEXX's Mental Health
and Disability Vendors**
by IDEXX



We explored new and promising practices for infusing inclusion in time away.

As diversity, equity and inclusion continue to influence well-being strategies, so too do they play an increasingly important role in leave benefits. Seventy percent of large employers consider diversity and inclusion to a great or moderate extent in designing their leave benefits. Forum members are leading the way and engaged in a brainstorming activity to identify practical ways to incorporate tenets of diversity, equity and inclusion into company leave policies. This work informed a new resource, [An Inclusive Look at Leave](#), available to all Business Group members. We also continued our role in elevating disability inclusion through an article and [podcast](#).



EMPLOYER DISCUSSION

Idea Sharing and Brainstorming on DEI and Time Away

led by our partners at Aon, Brown & Brown Strategic Non-Medical Solutions and Marsh McLennan Agency



NEW RESOURCE

[An Inclusive Look at Leave](#)



NEW RESOURCE

[Disability Inclusion in Health and Well-being](#)



We prepared for new and coming leave laws.

The multistate madness of leave laws continues as our community strives to balance compliance with a positive employee experience. Throughout the year, Aflac, New York Life, MetLife, Sedgwick and Brown & Brown Non-Medical Solutions provided insights into current and coming state local leave laws. We touched on need-to-know information on new and expiring COVID-19 leaves across the country, upcoming paid family leaves from Oregon to Virginia and legislative trends to prepare for (e.g., more paid sick, pregnancy loss and domestic violence leaves).



PARTNER PRESENTATIONS

Policy Updates

by New York Life, MetLife, Sedgwick and Brown & Brown Strategic Non-Medical Solutions



EMPLOYER DISCUSSION

Administering FMLA and the Leave Beyond



EMPLOYER DISCUSSION

Managing Regulatory Leaves



PARTNER PRESENTATION

New Hampshire and Virginia— When the Private Sector is Called Upon to Solve Paid Leave Challenges

by Aflac

We explored the promise of technology, self-service and data.

Having data or the latest technology is not enough; both must be leveraged strategically to reap desired benefits. For example, many large employers have made significant investments in absence management platforms but still experience the pain of daily error reports. Forum members discussed their experiences and successes in making improvements through end-to-end reviews and strong vendor partnerships. Aon also shared how we can make data actionable by looking holistically at medical, absence and safety data, identifying multipronged diagnostic drivers of business costs and providing solutions for treatment, risk reduction and more.



PARTNER PRESENTATION

It's Time to Get Proactive with Engaging Employees
by Wellthy



ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Workday, HRIS Systems and Leave Integration



PARTNER PRESENTATION

The Next Generation of AI Insights: Aon's Integrated Analytics Intelligence
by Aon



EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

Employee Self-Service and Guided Moments
by MetLife



We share where we're turning our attention next.

During our October 2022 Forum meeting, we shared our biggest leave and time away projects for 2023 and what we'd most like to learn from each other moving forward. The employee experience and managing the ever-changing statutory leave landscape were themes reiterated throughout the conversation.

- Employee experience
- Managing statutory leave landscape
- Communications strategies
- Return-to-work approaches
- Overall leave strategy/roadmap
- Automation of internal operations
- Bringing processes in-house or outsourcing processes
- Evaluating third-party partners
- Internal staffing changes
- Mental health
- Integrating well-being and time away initiatives
- Global leave strategies and party
- Partnerships, trainings and communications with HR business partners and managers
- Time off dashboard/tool for managers
- Expanding parental, caregiving and bereavement leaves and associated benefits

We continued to flourish as a community.

Amy Kelly joined Cassandra McSweeney as a Forum co-chair. We are grateful for the leadership and strategic direction they provide to the Forum. In 2022, we continued to welcome new members.



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MEMBERS



Amy Kelly
Walmart



Cassandra McSweeney
Google

And we can't wait for 2023...



Virtual Meeting



Employer-Driven Leave Conversation (Virtual)



Networking Dinner & Meeting in Washington, DC



Employer-Driven Leave Conversation (Virtual)



Meeting & Networking Reception in Washington, DC



Employer-Driven Leave Conversation (Virtual)



Employee experience with leave benefits



Navigating current and coming statutory leaves



Focus on business value of leaves and associated benefits



Future-proofing parental and caregiver benefits



Leave surveys and data to drive change



Benefits communication



Engaging and partnering with HR business partners, managers and ERGs



Mental health and time away



Return to work



Inclusive leave and disability benefits and approaches



Global approaches and parity and more!

Thank you to our industry partners for your thought leadership, engagement and expertise!

