

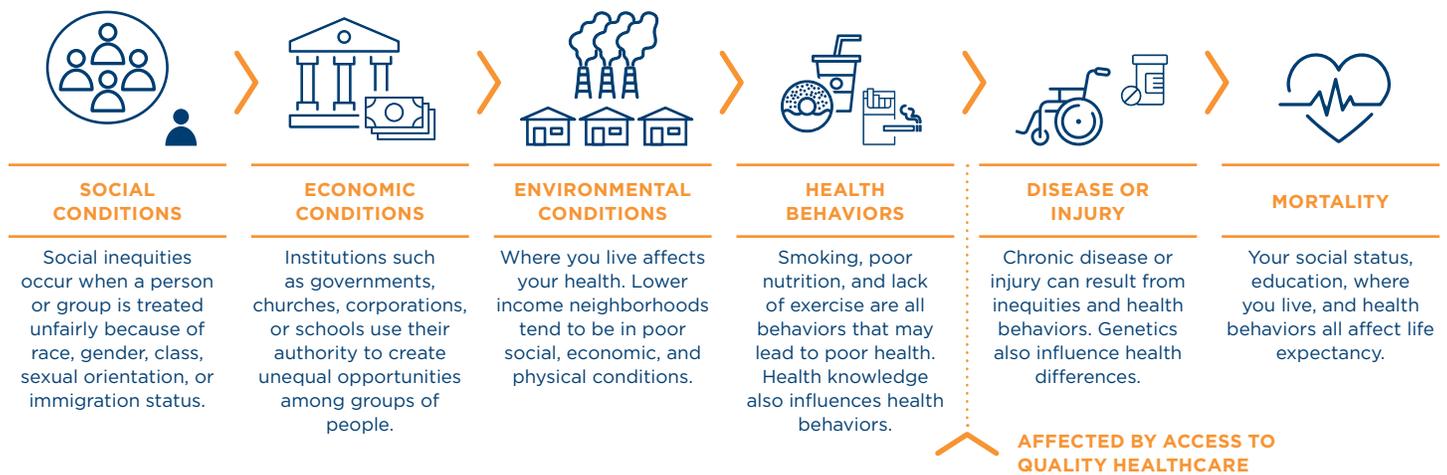
# ACTION BRIEF

## SPECIAL FEATURE FOR EMPLOYEES

### UNDERSTANDING HEALTH EQUITY

Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This is more than just health benefits. It also requires using workplace and community resources to remove blocks to health such as poverty, discrimination, poor quality education and housing, unsafe environments, and inferior healthcare.

#### What is Health Equity?



#### What Does Helpful Healthcare Look Like

*Meeting Patients Where They Are Leads to Better Chronic Pain Management*



About 116 million Americans suffer from chronic pain, yet there are very few options to treat it. Surgery and medication don't work very well and can even make pain worse or result in opioid addiction. Patients living with chronic pain who have lower education, literacy, and working memory gained more benefit from cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT or "talk therapy") for chronic pain than pain psychoeducation groups (EDU or "education and information"). Personalized group CBT and EDU interventions adapted for patients with limited reading skills and delivered at low-income clinics significantly improved pain and physical function compared with usual care.

- ▶ [Watch a video](#)
- ▶ [Read the PCORI study](#)
- ▶ [Read "What is Health Equity"](#)

If you do not understand your benefits, you likely are not getting the most value from them. If you need the materials in your native language, ask your health plan for translation help. The phone number and website address are on your health plan member ID card.

# Action Steps for Employees

## 1. Understand health and other benefits available through your employer.



If you have benefits such as health, life, disability, and health and retirement savings accounts and are not sure how to use them, contact your manager or someone in HR for help. Studies estimate that up to 80% of employees are confused about their benefits. You are not alone!

Many employers offer benefits even to part-time employees to help them be as healthy as possible. This might include an employee assistance program; telehealth discounts; paid time off for vaccines and preventive care; daycare assistance; discounts on fitness clubs; and more.

## 2. Get preventive care and care for chronic conditions.



Getting preventive care and care for chronic conditions often helps catch small problems before they become serious. Talk to your doctor about:

- Blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol tests
- Cancer screenings like mammograms and colonoscopies
- Counseling on topics such as quitting smoking, losing weight, sleeping better, eating healthy, depression and

anxiety, and dealing with alcohol and substance use

- Advice and treatment for living well with a chronic disease
- Anything else that you don't understand or that worries you

## 3. Choose a primary care doctor.



Choosing and regularly seeing a trusted primary care doctor allows you to:

- Build a relationship so you can address physical or mental health concerns as they arise.
- Help the doctor understand and address how family, social and economic factors may be shaping your health and lifestyle.
- Have all your records in one place if you see other doctors and specialists.

## 4. Take care of your mental health and wellbeing.



Almost 70% of employees report higher levels of work stress since the COVID-19 outbreak. The number of people who rated the state of their mental health in the lowest range (3 or under on a 10-point scale) has doubled since the pandemic began. There is no shame in seeking help to improve your mental health.

- If you have health insurance, there are many in-person and virtual options. Visit your health plan website to find in-network providers or call the number on your health plan member ID card.

b. Many free, confidential options are also available.

- For referrals and access to care: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
  - call 9-1-1 in an emergency
  - call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
  - use the Lifeline Chat
  - text HELLO to 741741

## 5. Assess your eating and exercise habits.



Workplace health programs can help you take control of your lifestyle and learn healthy habits. Ask your manager and co-workers about workplace options and supportive groups.

## 6. Use community resources as needed.



Millions of full- and part-time workers rely on federal healthcare and food programs. If you need help:

- Findhelp.org: Connects you to local financial help, food pantries, medical care, substance use programs and much more.
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service: Increases food security and reduces hunger by providing children and low-income people access to healthy food
- Top 10 Government Programs for Low-income Families

**READ MORE**  
[Preventive Care Guidelines](#)