New Initiative Helps Employers Take on Depression, Leading Cause of Lost Productivity in the U.S.

“Right Direction” — First-of-its-Kind Initiative

Canton, Ohio – May 15, 2013 – Depression is a leading cause of lost productivity in the United States with an annual cost of $44 billion to employers.¹ A new initiative encourages companies to invest in their workforce to gain healthier, more productive employees, as well as achieve decreased disability costs, less turnover and better retention of valued employees.

To help combat the significant impact of depression on individuals and businesses, the Partnership for Workplace Mental Health, a program of the American Psychiatric Foundation, and Employers Health, a national employer coalition based in Ohio, are introducing Right Direction, a first-of-its-kind initiative to raise awareness about depression in the workplace and its effect on productivity, promote early recognition of symptoms, and reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.

The initiative officially launches today at the Employers Health 14th Annual Employer Symposium in North Canton, Ohio and will be presented to the mental health community during the 166th Annual American Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting, May 18-22, 2013 in San Francisco.

“Employee satisfaction and well-being are strongly linked to business success, which is just one of the many reasons it’s important to support those experiencing depression in the workplace,” said Marcas Miles, director, Programs and Communications at Employers Health. “Right Direction is unique in that it goes beyond telling employers what they should do to actually providing them a step-by-step tool to de-stigmatize depression in the workplace and help employees function better both in and out of work.”

Depression in the Workplace

Depression is very common – one in 10 people struggle with depression.² Despite advances in treatments, only one-third of people with diagnosable mental health conditions seek care.³

Depression can have a profound impact in the workplace because of absenteeism (days away from work), but also due to presenteeism (being at work, but not engaged/productive), which is exacerbated by cognitive symptoms that occur with depression, including difficulty concentrating, indecisiveness and forgetfulness, which can affect up to 94 percent of patients.⁴ Researchers found that absence, disability, and lost productivity from depression cost

---


employers more than four times the cost of employee medical treatment, even when workers’ compensation medical costs are considered. Additionally, data show that mental illness short-term disability claims are growing by 10 percent annually and can account for 30 percent or more of the corporate disability experience for the typical employer.

The Right Direction Initiative
In developing Right Direction, the Partnership for Workplace Mental Health and Employers Health engaged an employer workgroup comprised of representatives from corporate, government and non-profit organizations to ensure the resources developed meet the varying business needs of employers. The end result is the Right Direction “Field Guide,” a toolkit including a step-by-step implementation plan, approach to sharing the business case with the C-suite, educational presentations, as well as corresponding promotional resources, such as posters, intranet copy and template materials which can be developed into TV slides.

“Most companies offer employee assistance programs and mental health benefits, but we found that employers wanted tools to take on depression in the workplace,” said Clare Miller, director of the Partnership for Workplace Mental Health. “They realize that many people who need help aren’t getting it. In fact, employees with depression sometimes aren’t aware they have the condition. We want to encourage information-seeking behavior around depression, help employees get healthy through a variety of resources and tools, and help employers improve the health of their bottom-line through improved work performance, increased productivity, decreased absenteeism, and importantly, improved job satisfaction.”

The toolkit and resources are available free of charge to all employers in the U.S. through RightDirectionforMe.com/ForEmployers. The website also serves as the employee portal, offering educational information on common symptoms of workplace depression, a depression survey, resources for how to discuss this with family, how to talk with your employer about job accommodations and additional resources outside the workplace to access for help.

Support for this educational initiative is provided jointly by Takeda Pharmaceuticals U.S.A., Inc., and Lundbeck U.S., two pharmaceutical companies located in Deerfield, IL, that are committed to developing therapies and programs to help people living with mental health conditions.

6 Marlowe JF. Depression’s surprising toll on worker productivity. Employee Benefits Journal. March 2002, pp. 16-20
12 Partnership for Workplace Mental Health. White paper.
About the Partnership for Workplace Mental Health
The Partnership for Workplace Mental Health is a program of the American Psychiatric Foundation, a subsidiary of the American Psychiatric Association. The Partnership works with businesses to ensure employees and their families living with mental illness, including substance use disorders, receive effective care. The Partnership for Workplace Mental Health collaborates with employers to advance effective approaches to mental health and promotes the business case for quality mental health care, including early recognition, access to care and effective treatment. The Partnership also identifies and highlights the successful approaches employers are taking to address mental health.

About Employers Health
Founded in 1983 by a group of companies in Ohio, Employers Health Coalition, Inc. is a not-for-profit, 501(c) (3) organization that helps plan sponsors control the cost of healthcare. In 1999, Employers Health Purchasing Corporation was incorporated as a subsidiary of the coalition to manage group purchasing programs and government advocacy. Today, these two organizations, collectively known as Employers Health, represent more than 300 member organizations and three million lives. Employers Health is a national coalition of employers working together to improve the cost, quality and accessibility of high-value healthcare services through value-based group purchasing, data analysis and benefits-design consultation, educational programming, community quality initiatives and legislative monitoring and advocacy. For more information see www.ehpco.com.

Contacts
Clare Miller       Marcas Miles
Director, Partnership for Workplace        Director, Programs and Communications
Mental Health, American Psychiatric Foundation     Employer Health
703-907-8673      330-639-2280
cmiller@psych.org     mmiles@ehpco.com

Kim Sammons
GCI Health
404-260-3555
Kim.Sammons@GCIHealth.com

###