

## The compounding effects of obesity and diabetes on brain health

When considering the ways chronic conditions impact your workforce, it's crucial to understand how the impacts on brain health can be compounded when diagnoses stack up.

Obesity, for example, is [linked to more than half<sup>1</sup>](#) of new type 2 diabetes cases, and people with both conditions experience even greater [productivity and activity impairments<sup>2</sup>](#) than those with obesity alone. Additionally, fluctuating blood sugar levels in people with diabetes can cause [diabetes brain fog<sup>3</sup>](#), which leads to decreased concentration, mood swings, and memory problems. Diabetes can also [damage the brain<sup>4</sup>](#) by affecting nerves and blood vessels – which in some cases can lead to other serious problems over time, such as Alzheimer's disease. Furthermore, young adults with obesity tend to have higher rates of comorbidities and may also feel [less engaged with their health care<sup>2</sup>](#).

All these examples signal that coordinated benefits – which address physical and mental health – that are engaging and easy to access are important for improving the health of employees who are living with chronic conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

## Expanding access to more proactive and integrated care

[Treating obesity](#) and preventing related conditions like diabetes requires a multifaceted and multidisciplinary approach involving medical care, dietitians, exercise specialists, and mental health support. Throughout each interaction, a focus on the individual's holistic health should be front and center. The challenge comes in creating a seamless, easy-to-access experience for employers and employees by integrating a range of programs, solutions, and tools – a challenge [Cigna Healthcare](#) is well suited to overcome.

Our Diabetes Prevention Program, which is offered through our partnership with Omada, is an online program that inspires healthy, long-term habits for weight management. The program includes:

- A full-time health coach to keep participants on track
- A wireless scale to monitor progress
- An interactive program that adapts to the participant
- Weekly online lessons to educate and inspire
- A small group of peers for real-time support

Cigna Healthcare also provides a suite of digital health solutions, behavioral counseling, and cost containment measures to support weight loss and diabetes management, reducing health care costs significantly.

Our SafeGuardRx for Cigna Weight Management program, for example, helps members develop personalized weight-loss plans that fit their lifestyle and medication needs. Patients get 24/7 access to online counseling, prescription drugs when appropriate, and support from specialized pharmacists and other clinicians to encourage medication adherence. What's more, our SafeguardRx Diabetes Care Value program focuses on containing overall costs by preventing diabetes for those who are at risk and improving outcomes and care coordination for those who have a diabetes diagnosis. The program does so by utilizing digital health solutions, a quality pharmacy network, specialized support, and cost management tools that deliver real results.

MDLIVE for Cigna Healthcare includes MDLIVE Health Coaching for patients living with chronic conditions, including hypertension, prediabetes, and weight management issues. Prescribed by MDLIVE physicians as part of patient treatment plans, the program features an app designed to engage patients in their care between their routine virtual visits. The program provides helpful steps and insights to help support lifestyle changes, enabling patients to better manage their conditions and achieve optimal health and wellness.

## **Finding holistic health solutions for all employees**

As obesity rates continue to rise, employers can expect to see the effects on [workplace health](#) in the foreseeable future. Supporting employees with accessible and individualized weight-loss strategies, preventive care, and behavioral support is key to keeping them healthy and productive.

Cigna Healthcare works together with employers to create comprehensive benefits that address all aspects of well-being, helping improve long-term health outcomes, increase work productivity, and lower medical costs for employees no matter their job, age, or socioeconomic background. To learn how you can leverage benefits integration for your employees, talk to a Cigna Healthcare representative or broker today.

### **Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company**

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<sup>1</sup> Journal of the American Heart Association, “Quantifying the Sex-Race/Ethnicity-Specific Burden of Obesity on Incident Diabetes Mellitus in the United States”, Feb 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Diabetes, Metabolic Syndrome and Obesity: Targets and Therapy, “Adult Obesity and Health-Related Quality of Life, Patient Activation, Work Productivity, and Weight Loss Behaviors in the United States”, June 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Healthline, “Can Diabetes Cause Brain Fog?”, Feb 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “The Effects of Diabetes on the Brain”, May 2022.

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