



Hidden Value: The Business Case for Reproductive Health

Executive Summary

Women comprise over half of United States jobholders and are increasingly represented across roles, from the frontline to the C-suite.¹ In recent years, companies have increased investments in attracting, supporting, and retaining women, recognizing the potential for business value. Despite the progress achieved to date, however, companies continue to overlook a critical factor that enables women's participation and advancement in the workforce: access to comprehensive reproductive health care.

Hidden Value: The Business Case for Reproductive Health illuminates the link between access to reproductive health care and business performance, documenting for the first time and in a robust way why and how access to comprehensive reproductive health care is important to a company's bottom line. It is informed by interviews and input from 39 companies, including 24 companies in the Fortune 500, and existing research on employee well-being and corporate benefits. The findings demonstrate that by addressing gaps in reproductive health care, companies stand to benefit in terms of talent attraction and retention at all skill levels, as well as health care costs and reputation.

Reproductive health services are used by nearly all women—99% of women have used contraception, and 24% of women have had an abortion by age 45.^{2,3} Despite wide usage, this report finds that **companies are often unaware of the benefits they provide for reproductive health and often may unintentionally limit contraceptive options and restrict coverage for abortion.** The vast majority of companies interviewed also fail to consider risks posed by the current political environment, in which **restrictive policies affect women in 29 states.**⁴ These laws and policies have a lasting impact on all employees, both those who have private insurance through their employers and those who access health care through marketplace plans or government assistance programs.

Hidden Value: The Business Case for Reproductive Health argues that comprehensive reproductive health care should be a priority for American businesses for five major reasons.

1. Widening the Pipeline and Attracting Talent

Access to comprehensive reproductive health care, including contraception and abortion, is a major factor supporting women's participation in the workforce. Women in states with better access to contraception have higher rates of labor force participation and more frequently pursue full-time employment.⁵ Women also consider the policy environment in career decisions—a **majority of college-educated women (56%) say they would not apply to a job in a state that has recently banned abortion.**⁶ By supporting comprehensive reproductive health access, companies can improve their own competitiveness for talent, especially among younger workers.

2. Supporting and Retaining Existing Talent

To enter and advance in the workforce, women must have agency to choose if and when they want to have children. **86% of women state that controlling if and when to have children has been important to their careers.**⁷ Women who cannot access abortion when needed are three times more likely to be unemployed and four times more likely to have a household income below the federal poverty level.⁸ Contraception and abortion access are also tied to women's ability to invest in education and training, ultimately affecting opportunities for advancement. As a result, lack of access to reproductive health care may heighten attrition and turnover costs.

3. Providing High-Impact Benefits with Low-Cost Investments

Reproductive health benefits, particularly contraception and abortion, are inexpensive relative to companies' overall health care costs. None of the 39 companies interviewed for this report mentioned cost as a limiting factor for coverage of reproductive health care. Conversely, costs for contraception and abortion can represent significant expenses for women and their partners if they lack adequate insurance coverage.

4. Delivering on Diversity and Inclusion

80% of the world's largest public companies have made a public commitment to gender diversity.⁹ To achieve these commitments, companies must consider how their benefits, including coverage for reproductive health, support an equitable workplace.

5. Preparing for Greater Scrutiny

Stakeholders are increasingly calling on corporations to take stands on social issues—and reproductive health is no exception. While many companies may feel removed from the reproductive health conversation today, expectations are changing and companies should be prepared for greater scrutiny in the future.

To close the gap in reproductive health access and realize the value of these benefits, companies must act to:

- **Ensure benefits support the spectrum of employees' reproductive health needs**

Companies can audit their reproductive health coverage and then work with insurance providers to close gaps and create a supportive culture that enables benefit utilization. This includes making the details of reproductive health coverage clearer to employees and less stigmatized. 69% of women with health insurance currently do not know whether their coverage includes abortion.¹⁰

- **Understand and engage in reproductive health policy**

Companies can track and engage in relevant public or private policy discussions, to ensure access to reproductive health care for their employees. For example, companies should sign on to amicus briefs and examine how corporate political spending may inadvertently promote restrictions on reproductive health care.

Hidden Value: The Business Case for Reproductive Health demonstrates that support for reproductive health care has a positive impact on a range of corporate stakeholders from employees to investors, and that the negative consequences of inaction are far reaching and impact the bottom line.