



eBook

5 healthcare trends every employer should be watching

Insights from Thrive Summit 2025



McKinsey
& Company

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Most employers didn't see GLP-1s coming.

One month, they were background noise. The next, they were pulling budgets off course and filling up inboxes with *"We need to talk about GLP-1s."*

They came fast. They were expensive. And, for many, they came completely unexpectedly. So it's no surprise the same question echoed across the C-suite: *"How did we miss this?"*

You didn't miss it.

You were focused on running your business, recalculating forecasts for the third time this quarter, and trying to make benefits work for everyone.

Meanwhile, GLP-1s went from niche to headline to dinner talk in the time it takes to approve a PTO request.

That's the thing about market shifts: they don't knock. They slip under the radar until suddenly they're everywhere. But when you know what to watch for — and where to look — you're not just able to react faster. You'll be able to lead smarter.

That's where we come in.

At Personify Health, we help employers spot these shifts early — before they become costly surprises.

We surface patterns. Connect the dots. And bring together the voices that help you see what's next, sooner.

That's exactly what Thrive Summit 2025 was all about.



In one of our most talked-about sessions, “Peering Down the Rabbit Hole of Market Trends,” our Executive Chairman, Chris Michalak, sat down with three of the sharpest minds in the industry:



Shelley Stewart III
Senior Partner, Global Leader of Reputation & Engagement (R&E) and Chair of the McKinsey Institute for Black Economic Mobility
McKinsey & Company



Rivka Friedman
Managing Director and Health Care Innovation team lead
morganhealth



Ellen Kelsay
President & CEO
Business Group on Health

Together, they unpacked the early signals shaping the future of employer-sponsored health — and what leaders like you need to be tracking now.

This eBook captures five of the most imminent trends from that conversation — not to predict the future, but to help you prepare for it.

Photo by [Lisa Hause](#)

Want to see the full conversation?

Get 45-minutes of expert insights →

1

Women's health is taking center stage

What to Watch:

- Menopause care and workplace accommodations
- Fertility and reproductive health benefits
- Chronic condition management tailored to women
- Emerging femtech innovations
- Expanding VC investment and digital platforms



1 Women's health is taking center stage

Women's health is no longer a supporting role in the benefits conversation — it's become a main storyline. And it's long overdue.

"We're starting to see a real rise in the market of products that are selling actual health care to women of all ages, not just around childbearing," said Rivka.

Rivka's words reflect a long-overdue shift — clinically, culturally, and commercially.

Historically underfunded and underserved, women's health is finally getting the investment, innovation, and attention it deserves. We're seeing breakthroughs in hormonal therapies. Smarter fertility support. More inclusive menopause care. And chronic condition management that reflects how women experience conditions like heart disease, autoimmune disorders, and depression.

And that wave of innovation is reshaping the market. According to [Nova One Advisor](#), the **U.S. women's health market reached \$23.2 billion** in 2023 and is projected to grow to **\$34.5 billion by 2033**, with key growth areas including PCOS, endometriosis, osteoporosis, and menopause.

Investments in the women's health market are surging to meet that demand. [Silicon Valley Bank](#) reports that venture capital funding in women's health hit \$2.6 billion in 2024 — a 55% increase over 2023, and more than triple what the sector received just five years ago.

When expanded to include conditions that disproportionately affect women — such as thyroid disorders, autoimmune diseases, and stroke — the total investment jumps to **\$10.6 billion**.

One of the fastest-growing segments is menopause—once stigmatized and rarely discussed, now a powerful market force. Valued at \$5.3 billion in 2023, [the U.S. menopause market is expected to reach \\$9.12 billion by 2030](#), growing at a 4.9% CAGR.

As the market grows, so do expectations around support. Today, [89% of employed U.S. women](#) say that employer-sponsored health benefits positively influence workplace satisfaction, and **85% say benefits directly impact retention and recruitment**.

Women are demanding care that sees their full health story, not just one chapter. And the employers that embrace this shift will not just improve health outcomes — they'll build more inclusive, future-ready cultures.



2

Autoimmune therapies are gaining ground

What to Watch:

- Breakthrough therapies and new R&D pipelines
- Rising autoimmune diagnoses, especially among women
- Employer readiness to support chronic, invisible conditions



2 Autoimmune therapies are gaining ground

Autoimmune conditions aren't new. But the spotlight on them? That's starting to shift.

"We keep hearing a lot of people talk about autoimmune as, like, the next thing," said Ellen. "It's not a cost driver now, but maybe it will be in five years."

That kind of foresight matters. Because more than 23.5 million Americans are already living with an autoimmune disease.

And as prevalence rises — and high-cost therapies enter the market — the window to get ahead is closing fast.

This is a turning point.

When expanded to include conditions that disproportionately affect women — such as thyroid disorders, autoimmune diseases, and stroke — the total investment jumps to **\$10.6 billion**.

The autoimmune market is accelerating — fast.

Projected to reach \$14.66 billion by 2029, autoimmune treatments are growing at a 14.1% CAGR — driven by a convergence of forces:

- **Rising diagnoses**, especially among women in their prime working years
- **Growing awareness**, with more people recognizing symptoms and seeking care

- **Breakthrough R&D**, with new therapies targeting conditions like lupus, MS, and rheumatoid arthritis
- **Next-gen diagnostics**, making earlier detection more accessible than ever

Often invisible. And disproportionately affect women — especially those balancing caregiving, careers, and chronic symptoms.

That makes them one of the next frontiers of equitable, personalized benefits design.

The opportunity? Step in early.

By expanding access to diagnostics, embedding support for emerging therapies, and creating space for employees to manage chronic conditions without stigma or delay.

Because what seems like tomorrow's cost — is today's challenge for millions of employees.



3

Cell and gene therapies are moving into the mainstream

What to Watch:

- Emerging gene and cell therapy approvals
- High-cost therapies and the coverage challenge
- Employee support strategies for complex treatments



3 Cell and gene therapies are moving into the mainstream

Once reserved for rare, life-threatening cases — cell and gene therapies are stepping into the spotlight. Not just for ultra-rare conditions. But for common, everyday diagnoses.

“We’re now seeing cell and gene therapies for peanut allergies,” said Ellen.

And the data backs it up.

According to the [ASGCT + Citeline Q1 2024 Report](#), there are now 4,000+ gene, cell, and RNA therapies in development — signaling a clear shift from niche innovation to broad clinical adoption.

But as these advances move from **exception to expectation**, employers face a new kind of challenge.

Because while the science is catching up to what’s possible, access to them is still lagging.

- Treatments can cost hundreds of thousands — even millions — per patient
- Approval pipelines are expanding faster than most coverage models
- And employees are asking questions that their HR teams aren’t yet equipped to answer

This isn’t just a medical breakthrough. It’s a moment of reckoning for benefits strategy. For employers, the opportunity — and responsibility — is clear:

- Understand how these therapies fit into a sustainable, equitable benefits model
- Prepare for employee inquiries tied to cancer, autoimmune conditions, and even pediatric allergies
- Offer wraparound support — from access and navigation to financial guidance and care coordination

These treatments are no longer theoretical. They are here. And they’re only getting more relevant, visible, and accessible.

The employers who prepare now — with empathy, clarity, and strategy — will be the ones ready to respond when it matters most.



4

The aging workforce is here to stay

What to Watch:

- Chronic condition care as a retention strategy
- Telehealth and home-based care for older employees
- Plan design that protects and empowers aging talent



4 The aging workforce is here to stay

People are living longer. They're working longer. And they're managing more complex health needs along the way.

"We are going to have people working... for a lot longer, who are going to be older and sicker and have more chronic needs," said Ellen.

By 2050, the U.S. population aged 65+ will nearly **double to 83.9 million**. And by 2030, the worker-to-retiree ratio will shrink to 2.9:1 — increasing pressure on both Medicare and employer-sponsored health systems.

That shift will redefine the employer-employee relationship — and far from being a challenge, it's an invitation to evolve.

Aging workers bring something invaluable to the organizations they work for: **wisdom, loyalty, and perspective**. They're often the most engaged. The most experienced. The most committed. Supporting them isn't just the right thing to do — it's a smart, strategic investment.

So, how do we support their unique needs?

The answer starts with personalized benefits design:

- **Chronic condition management:** With cardiovascular and neurology outpatient services expected to grow by 25% and 23% respectively, accessible, high-quality specialty care will be a crucial part of supporting aging employees.
- **Flexible care models:** Home-based care, telehealth, and virtual monitoring create options that align with older workers' preferences.
- **Age-inclusive plan design:** Coordinated care, preventive screenings, and access to specialty support can help aging employees stay healthy, productive, and engaged.

This isn't about managing age. It's about reimagining longevity as a competitive advantage.



5

Mental health support is expected

What to Watch:

- Rising behavioral health claims and care-seeking across all age groups
- Access gaps, especially in rural areas and Medicaid populations
- Integrated support models: behavioral health in primary care, telehealth, and peer-led programs



5 Mental health support is expected

The stigma is fading. And help-seeking behavior is rising. And what was once taboo — is now turning into table stakes.

“Some optimism around... people seeking help for mental health issues and just broader acceptance,” said Shelley.

That optimism is well-placed — because mental health isn’t a passing trend. A cultural shift is underway, reshaping how individuals, communities, and employers prioritize mental well-being. Psychological safety, access to care, and proactive support aren’t just nice-to-haves — they’re fast becoming essential infrastructure. Essential to resilience. Core to performance.

And smart employers are responding — not with posters, but with real programs.

Employers are stepping up

Employees want real support — and employers are responding. According to [Mercer](#), 94% of large employers (500+ employees) have strengthened mental health coverage, expanded support tools, or launched new programs since 2022. Nearly three-quarters have added virtual behavioral health options, and 68% have enhanced employee assistance programs.

But it’s not just about offering more — it’s about offering what works. And when mental health programs are built around personalized, integrated care, the results speak for themselves.

And when those programs are built around personalized, integrated care — the results speak for themselves.

We’ve seen it firsthand with our own clients. Organizations that use our personalized health platform — which integrates mental health resources across prevention, navigation, coaching, and care delivery — are seeing real impact: .

- **79% of employees** report feeling more focused, present, and motivated at work
- **3% reduction** in mental health care trend costs
- Measurable gains in **retention, engagement, and productivity**



See how to support your team with powerful mental health tools

Download the playbook →

But even with these successes, access remains a major hurdle

Despite growing demand and employer action, access to care remains a stubborn barrier:

- **129 million Americans** live in federally designated mental health provider shortage areas
- In rural counties, **65% have no practicing psychiatrist** at all
- Even with telehealth, **average wait times** are 67 days for in-person and 43 days for virtual care

That kind of delay isn't just inconvenient — it's dangerous. It's the difference between early intervention and costly crisis care. Between a tough week — and long-term burnout.



The next frontier: Integrated, intelligent support

To bridge these gaps, forward-thinking employers are moving toward whole-person care — embedding mental health into the broader health experience.

- Integrating behavioral health into **primary care**
- Expanding **telehealth and virtual-first** options
- Investing in **peer support** and navigation tools that reduce stigma and close care gaps

Because awareness is only the beginning. It's access, personalization, and follow-through that build cultures of psychological safety — and healthier, more resilient organizations.

Employers who meet this moment with compassion and innovation — not just awareness posters — will be able to build healthier, happier organizations at lower costs.

Don't let history repeat itself

GLP-1s weren't a fluke. They were a preview.

"Let's not have that happen to us again," Ellen said. As employers, we must constantly be asking ourselves, "What's the next thing?"

You just read five of them — from the rapid rise of women's health and autoimmune therapies to the mainstreaming of cell and gene treatments, the shifting needs of an aging workforce, and the mental health movement reshaping workplace expectations.

Each trend brings risk if ignored — but real opportunity if addressed with foresight, empathy, and action. Together, they form a clear mandate for employers:

- Modernize your benefits strategy
- Personalize your approach to care
- Invest in access, innovation, and equity

At Personify Health, we help employers do exactly that — by integrating early signals, workforce insights, and whole-person solutions into one seamless integrated platform.

We don't just react to what's next. We help you get ahead of it.

Because the future of healthcare isn't waiting for your next renewal cycle. It's already here — in your claims, your culture, your people.

So future proof your strategy. Stress-test it. Personalize it. Because when the next wave hits — and it will — you won't be caught flat-footed.

This time, you'll be ready.

And we'll be right there with you.

Let's build the future of health, together.

Photo by Lisa Hause



Want to learn more about how Personify Health helps organizations keep health up?



Save your spot for Thrive Summit 2026 — where we'll dive even deeper into what's next for employer health.

Save your spot →



Catch up on more Thrive 2025 session replays — and hear directly from the experts shaping tomorrow's strategies.

Watch the session replays →

About Personify Health

By bringing industry-leading third party administration, holistic wellbeing, and navigation solutions together, all in one place, we have created the industry's first and only personalized health platform. With decades of experience and global operations, we empower diverse and unique businesses – and diverse and unique people – to engage more deeply in health at a lower cost. Through our proprietary combination of data-driven personalization, science-backed methodology, and concierge-level clinical expertise, our end-to-end platform makes it easier to proactively address people's needs across their lives. With a personalized, holistic, and powerfully simple experience, we are redefining industry expectations and what it means to manage health.

Let's connect →



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HEALTH