News Releases

Canadian employers underestimate the presence of chronic disease in the workforce

- **1 in 2 Canadians with workplace drug plans have been diagnosed with a chronic disease or condition**
- **Most plan members are in favour of pharmacogenetic testing for precision medicine**

TORONTO, June 11, 2019 /CNW Telbec/ - The 22nd edition of *The Sanofi Canada Healthcare Survey* uncovered gaps in knowledge that can serve to help guide decision-making among employers who provide health benefit plans to employees. A persistent gap is employers' underestimation of the presence of chronic disease in their workforce, which suggests they may also underestimate the negative impact of unmanaged disease on productivity.

"Providers of workplace health benefit plans can use these results to help drive new benefit offerings and wellness initiatives that focus on supporting plan members with chronic disease," says Michael Mullette, President and CEO of Sanofi Canada. "The past few years have seen positive growth in supports for mental health, which can serve as a model for other major chronic conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease."

The Sanofi Canada Healthcare Survey also reveals employees' and employers' opinions on numerous other timely topics, including precision medicine, targeted health messaging, national Pharmacare and medical cannabis. The full report is available from Sanofi Canada's website at www.sanofi.ca/en/about-us/sanofi-canada-healthcare-survey.

Growing urgency to do more for chronic disease

- 54% of plan members have been diagnosed with at least one chronic disease or condition, increasing to 69% among those aged 55 to 64.
- Plan sponsors estimate that 39% of their workforce has a chronic condition.
- When chronic pain is added to the equation, 67% of employees have a condition that can impact productivity and lead to repeated absences from the workplace.
- 87% of employees with a chronic condition would like to know more about their condition and how to treat it.
- 82% of employers would like their benefit plan to do more to support employees with chronic conditions.

Changing menu for health benefits

- 74% of employees would consent to pharmacogenetic testing so that physicians can prescribe medications that are most likely to work well for them (referred to as precision medicine or personalized medicine); 65% of employers are interested in providing coverage for pharmacogenetic testing.
- 65% of employees would consent to receive health information based on their personal use of benefits; 74% of employers would like their benefit plan's insurance carrier to send such targeted health messaging to employees.
- 45% of employers agree medical cannabis should be covered by their workplace health benefit plan, up from 34% in 2018; 64% of employees believe medical cannabis should be covered.

Workplace drug plans misunderstood

- Employees and employers significantly underestimate the number of drugs covered by workplace drug plans, and overestimate the number of drugs covered by provincial drug plans.
- 77% of employees and 52% of employers have low or no knowledge about a possible national Pharmacare program in Canada.
- Levels of support are high among employees (87%) and employers (84%) for a Pharmacare that fills gaps in coverage for Canadians who have no insurance or are underinsured, and does not affect workplace drug plans.

Other topics addressed

Perceptions of quality of health benefit plans • Importance of job satisfaction and a wellness culture • Perceptions of funding • Expectations for retirement benefits • Support levels for virtual care, pharmacists' prescribing and health coaching • Importance of claims data analysis and the setting of objectives • Plan sponsors' desire to better understand absenteeism • What plan sponsors would like to do to improve their health benefit plan

ALSO IN THE REPORT:
"3 Steps for a Healthier Health Benefit Plan"
A simple one-page plan for positive changes

Supporting quotes from members of the Advisory Board

"The optimal use of drugs to treat chronic conditions needs to come before conversations about coverage for higher-cost drugs. Awareness of the impact of non-adherence appears to be growing, but as an industry we can raise more of an alarm so that this becomes a priority for action."

Danielle Vidal, Director of Business Development, SSQ Insurance

"There seems to be a trend toward plan members' willingness to pay more. Perhaps this is signaling that as we think more about wellness and preventative solutions, there is an openness to a shared-cost or co-pay model."
Mark Rolnick, Vice-President, Payor Partnerships & Plan Sponsor Innovation, Health Solutions by Shoppers Drug Mart

"There is a value proposition around holistically supporting health, and that's more easily achieved when we keep all benefit lines together. If the government manages drug coverage exclusively, we may lose the opportunity to fully leverage data to illustrate the gaps and respond proactively to trends in chronic disease with early, personalized interventions."
Christine Potvin, Vice-President, Group Life & Disability, Sun Life Financial

"It's definitely encouraging that plan members are more comfortable than not with personalized communications. But many plan sponsors say that they can't afford even one person complaining about the use of their data, and that shuts things down. Certainly, we understand that, but it's unfortunate because there is really good opportunity here."
Ryan Weiss, Assistant Vice-President, Group Customer Market Development, Great-West Life

"We are seeing a trend in RFPs, where more and more information is being requested of insurers. But what we are being asked to provide is not always giving policyholders what they need to create optimal benefit plans. Our role as a provider is to help policyholders identify priorities and create the best plan for them."
Marc Bertossini, Director, Marketing, Group and Business Insurance, Desjardins

About *The Sanofi Canada Healthcare Survey*

The Sanofi Canada Healthcare Survey is Canada's premier survey of health benefit plans, capturing the opinions, concerns and behaviours of employees and employers with health benefit plans. The 2019 edition of *The Sanofi Canada Healthcare Survey* was initiated by TC Media Content Research Group on behalf of Sanofi Canada. The survey was conducted online in January 2019. A total national sample of 1,505 primary holders of group health benefit plans completed the study. The data has been statistically weighted to ensure the age, gender and regional composition of the sample reflect those of the adult population according to the 2016 Census data. This survey was coupled with another online survey of 403 health benefit plan sponsors from across the country, conducted in January 2019. The data was statistically weighted to accurately reflect the geographic distribution of business and business size according to Industry Canada. The full report is available from Sanofi Canada's website at www.sanofi.ca/en/about-us/sanofi-canada-healthcare-survey.

About Sanofi

Sanofi is dedicated to supporting people through their health challenges. We are a global biopharmaceutical company focused on human health. We prevent illness with vaccines, provide innovative treatments to fight pain and ease suffering. We stand by the few who suffer from rare diseases and the millions with long-term chronic conditions.

With more than 100,000 people in 100 countries, Sanofi is transforming scientific innovation into healthcare solutions around the globe. Sanofi entities in Canada employ more than 2,000 people. In 2018, we invested $127.4 million in R&D in Canada, creating jobs, business and opportunity throughout the country.

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