



# Women and Mental Health

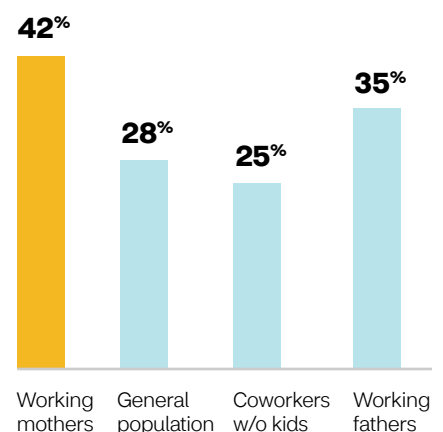
Women are often referred to as the “Chief Health Officers” of families, making 80 percent of household health care decisions.<sup>1</sup> They also comprise more than two-thirds of caregivers.<sup>2</sup> These responsibilities can drive women to put their own health needs last, which can have significant negative downstream effects.<sup>3</sup>

**Mental health issues affect men and women differently and disproportionately.** Actively addressing the mental health needs of women can benefit families, communities, and the population at large. Plan sponsors can play an important role in this effort.

## The pandemic’s toll on women’s mental health

Depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues have been exacerbated and highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to 2022 Harris Poll data commissioned by CVS Health, more working mothers have been diagnosed with anxiety and/or depression (42 percent) than the general population (28 percent), their coworkers without kids (25 percent), and working fathers (35 percent). Working mothers were also more likely to report that their mental health had worsened in the last year (33 percent).

**More working mothers have been diagnosed with anxiety and/or depression than the general population, their coworkers without kids, and working fathers:**





**85%**

of Americans list something increasing their stress levels

**Women are carrying the brunt of financial and household stress, identifying these pressing concerns more frequently than men.**



**Rising inflation**



Of the 50% of Americans worried about rising inflation:

**54%** female | **45%** male



**Affording my cost of living**

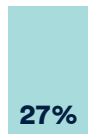


Of the 35% of Americans worried about affording the cost of living:

**39%** female | **31%** male



**My or my family's financial health**



Of the 27% of Americans worried about their or their family's financial health:

**31%** female | **23%** male



**My family's physical or mental health**



Of the 15% of Americans worried about their family's physical or mental health:

**18%** female | **13%** male



**The emotional health & wellness of my children**



Of the 10% of Americans worried about the emotional health & wellness of their children:

**14%** female | **7%** male

Since the pandemic began, more than 1 million women have left the workforce.<sup>5</sup> Those who remain contribute to overall stress-related health care and missed work costs for employers totaling \$300 billion per year.<sup>6</sup> Clearly, proactive efforts to improve women's mental health are key to robust employee attraction and retention and should be a priority for employers and plan sponsors.

[Learn more about \*\*the mental health crisis among working moms\*\* >>](#)

## Disproportionate risk, burden – and cost

Women in the United States are more at risk than men for depression and anxiety.<sup>7</sup> Prevalence of any mental illness (AMI) is higher among females (25.8%) than males (15.8%).<sup>8</sup> More than one in five women have experienced a mental health condition in the past year, such as depression or anxiety.<sup>9</sup> Many mental health conditions, such as depression and bipolar disorder, affect more women than men and have different symptoms for women.<sup>10</sup>



Prevalence of any mental illness (AMI) is higher among **females 25.8%** than **males 15.8%**.<sup>8</sup>

Medications can play a role in treating mental disorders and conditions and are often used in combination with other treatment approaches. Within the Caremark book of business, women comprise 68 percent of mental health spend.<sup>11</sup> The following classes of prescription drugs are commonly prescribed for mental health-related conditions:<sup>12</sup>

- Antidepressants
- Anti-anxiety medications
- Stimulants
- Antipsychotics
- Mood stabilizers

It's important not only to help ensure women have access to clinically appropriate, affordable medication, but also to provide ongoing support to improve adherence, close gaps in care, and drive better health outcomes. CVS Health offers [mental health support](#), including in-person services that are available at [CVS MinuteClinic](#) locations.

As virtual care becomes more widely accepted — six out of ten people report they would use telehealth services for mental health care — the addition of virtual options is key.<sup>13</sup> In a recent study by CVS Health, 59 percent of people said it is important to their health to have access to virtual care services.<sup>14</sup> Providing convenient access to care, whether it is in-person, virtual, or via an app, ensures that when women seek help, they're able to find what they need.

[Learn about the mental wellness apps available in our Point Solutions portfolio >>](#)

# What can plan sponsors do?

Payors can help to improve women's mental health by providing resources, expanding awareness of mental health issues, helping eliminate barriers to care, and working to destigmatize accessing mental health services.

## Help plan members locate the right providers

- ✓ Outline the differences between therapists, counselors, psychiatrists, and psychologists in benefit materials, enabling members to seek mental health services that best align with their needs
- ✓ Promote culturally sensitive care by ensuring provider networks include diverse professionals<sup>15</sup>

## Create opportunities through telehealth and online platforms

- ✓ Provide clear options so members can choose what works best for them in terms of convenience and cost
- ✓ Add third-party apps that support mental health to your benefits plan through our Point Solutions Management offering
- ✓ Ensure transparent pricing to make it easy for members to make informed decisions about the cost of programs not covered by insurance

## Expand awareness and provide resources

- ✓ Create a culture of mental health care support that minimizes stigma and encourages members to seek information and help
- ✓ Promote mental health awareness observances and resources on a regular basis



[Learn how plan sponsors can remove barriers to mental health services >>](#)

It can be hard for people to seek mental health treatment for multiple reasons, including social stigma, lack of awareness, access, and cost. Working together, we can help to make mental health a reality for all. From awareness to screenings and treatment, there is a continuum of opportunities to engage with members and help to ensure their well-being.

**CVS Caremark is committed to helping women meet their unique health care needs.** Through CVS Health's omnichannel approach, we can reduce barriers and enhance access to mental health care in a variety of settings, improving access and reducing costs.



**Healthier happens together™**

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