



Stay HR Savvy with HR Elements®

Welcome to the UBA Partner Firm exclusive monthly newsletter, delivering insights into timely human resources and employee benefits topics.

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Employee Benefits | Preparing for Menopause Accommodations Before They're Required

One [state law](#) now requires employers to provide reasonable workplace accommodations for employees experiencing menopause symptoms. While the legislation applies in one state, the broader message applies everywhere: menopause is moving into the mainstream of workplace policy. For benefit leaders across the country, this is an early indicator of what's ahead.

Menopause affects employees in the middle of their careers — often in senior or specialized roles. Symptoms such as sleep disruption, hot flashes, anxiety, and difficulty concentrating can influence day-to-day performance. Yet many organizations still treat menopause as a private health issue rather than a workforce strategy priority.

That mindset is shifting.

The Business Case Is Already There

Employee expectations are clear.

[84% of women say they want more support for menopause from their employers.](#)

That demand influences engagement, retention, and even job acceptance decisions. The productivity impact is also measurable.

[Mayo Clinic reports menopause contributes to \\$1.8 billion in lost work time each year.](#)

As more millennials enter this life stage, employers will see the effects across a larger portion of their workforce. Even if your state has not introduced legislation, the workforce reality remains the same.

What Reasonable Accommodations Can Look Like

Many supportive steps are operational rather than expensive.

- Flexible scheduling when sleep has been disrupted
- Hybrid or remote options during difficult symptom periods
- Adjustments to temperature or airflow in workspaces
- Clear processes for requesting temporary accommodations

These practical measures can stabilize productivity and reduce preventable turnover. But accommodation alone is only part of the equation. The larger opportunity sits within your benefits strategy.

Where Employers Can Start

Review Policies and Procedures

Examine existing accommodation, leave, and anti-discrimination policies. Even without a legal mandate, clear language around health-related flexibility reduces confusion and risk.

Evaluate Current Benefits

Many health plans already include access to primary care, gynecological specialists, mental health support, and pharmacy guidance. The issue is often awareness, not availability. Reframing these services within a menopause-support conversation can significantly improve utilization.

Equip Managers

Front-line leaders need guidance on how to respond appropriately when employees request adjustments. Simple training on empathy, documentation, and escalation pathways can make a meaningful difference.

Communicate Proactively

An internal education campaign can normalize menopause as a natural health transition rather than a taboo topic. When employees understand that support exists, they are more likely to use it. Support signals stability. Silence can signal indifference.

Organizations that address menopause thoughtfully demonstrate that career longevity matters. They also align workforce health with productivity goals rather than treating them as competing priorities.

Looking Ahead

The recent legislation is unlikely to be the last of its kind. As awareness increases, more employers will formalize menopause-related accommodations and benefits, regardless of state requirements. The question is not whether menopause affects your workforce. It does. The question is whether your benefits strategy acknowledges it.

Employers who act now by clarifying policies, aligning benefits, and opening the conversation will be better positioned to attract and retain top talent.

Workplace Culture | Reducing Disengagement Through Intentional Career Pathing

Disengagement rarely happens overnight.

It shows up quietly — fewer ideas shared in meetings, less initiative, steady but uninspired performance. Often, the issue isn't compensation or workload. It's uncertainty. Employees can't see what comes next.

In hybrid and flexible workplaces, opportunity for growth is less visible than it once was. Informal mentorship moments are fewer. Advancement paths feel unclear. And the traditional "corporate ladder" no longer reflects how most professionals want to build their careers. Intentional career pathing helps close that gap.

Today's Employee Expects Flexibility

Career growth used to mean one thing: move up. Today, career pathing shifts the focus from climbing to navigating. Instead of outlining only vertical promotions, organizations define multiple pathways based on skills, interests, and long-term goals.

That may include:

- Cross-functional moves
- Certification-based progression
- Project leadership opportunities
- Technical tracks that don't require managing people

When employees can see options, they're more likely to stay engaged.

Why Visibility Matters

Clarity drives commitment. When employees understand how their current role connects to future opportunities, they are more likely to:

- Take ownership of development
- Invest in new skills
- Stay motivated during demanding seasons
- Align their work with broader business goals

Without that visibility, even strong performers can feel stalled. Over time, that feeling turns into job searches.

Clear career pathways also strengthen recruiting. Candidates increasingly ask what growth looks like. Being able to show both vertical and lateral options gives them a reason to envision a future with your organization.

It's Important to Separate Career Pathing from Other Talent Strategies

Professional development improves performance in a current role. Succession planning prepares individuals for leadership roles. Career pathing creates a broader map of movement across the organization. Not everyone wants to manage a team. Some employees want deeper technical expertise or exposure to different departments. A strong culture supports both ambitions.

Getting Started

Building career pathways begins with structure and transparency.

Review your organizational chart. Identify natural progressions and overlapping skill sets across departments.

Align with compensation philosophy.

Clear pay bands and role definitions help ensure consistency and fairness.

Equip managers for career conversations.

Growth discussions should happen regularly, not just during annual reviews.

Design for lateral movement.

A shift from operations to analytics or from IT to project management can expand capability while keeping employees challenged.

Plan for operational impact.

Internal mobility strengthens engagement, but it requires thoughtful knowledge transfer.

Reducing disengagement doesn't always require new perks or sweeping change. When employees can see a future inside your organization, they are more likely to invest in it. Clear, intentional career pathways create direction, build commitment, strengthen culture, and help attract and retain top talent.

Dear HR Manager | Finding the Right Balance on Return-to-Work

Dear HR Manager,

Our leadership team wants employees back in the office more consistently, but many of my team members prefer hybrid flexibility. How can I make changes without hurting engagement or retention?

– Caught in the Middle

Dear Caught in the Middle,

You're not alone. Many leaders are navigating this exact tension.

Start by shifting the conversation from where people work to why it matters. Identify the work that truly benefits from in-person collaboration — such as onboarding, strategic planning, or team building. When expectations are tied to outcomes rather than visibility, employees are more likely to understand the rationale.

Next, be clear and consistent. Outline:

- Expected in-office days
- Core collaboration hours
- Role-based flexibility guidelines
- How exceptions are reviewed

Inconsistency across departments can quickly create frustration. Before rolling out changes, gather feedback. A brief survey or structured listening sessions can highlight concerns and improve implementation. Employees don't need to set the policy, but they do want transparency.

Finally, equip managers to lead hybrid teams effectively. Results, not physical presence, should measure performance. Clear communication and early attention to engagement signals will matter more than a specific number of office days.

Return-to-work decisions shape culture. When handled with clarity and structure, they can support business priorities while maintaining trust, helping your organization attract and retain strong talent.

- HR Manager

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