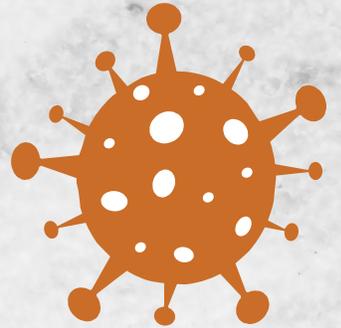


How the Pandemic Has Impacted Mental Health



Setting the Stage

In May 2019, HORAN published a Databyte on mental health where we reported that mental illness affects 2.5 times more Americans than cancer, heart disease and diabetes combined. HORANalytics® found that individuals with a psychiatric claim cost their employers 133% more than individuals without a mental illness claim. Additionally, for every employer dollar spent on mental health there is an additional \$37 lost as a result of decreased productivity, absenteeism and presenteeism.

This was a few months before the COVID-19 pandemic began—an event that sent mental illness cases soaring.

Now we're looking back on the previous two years to truly understand how much the pandemic has affected—in terms of volume and the associated costs—mental illness claims.

A Closer Look

The COVID-19 pandemic created stressors in all areas of life including: loss of loved ones, income deficit as a result of job reductions, childcare issues, personal health issues, etc. Navigating these obstacles are difficult enough but having to do so without being able to connect face-to-face with your support network makes these challenges even harder.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, "during the pandemic about 4 in 10 adults in the U.S. reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder, up from 1 in 10 adults who reported these symptoms from January to June 2019".

Increase in Mental Health Related Issues as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic

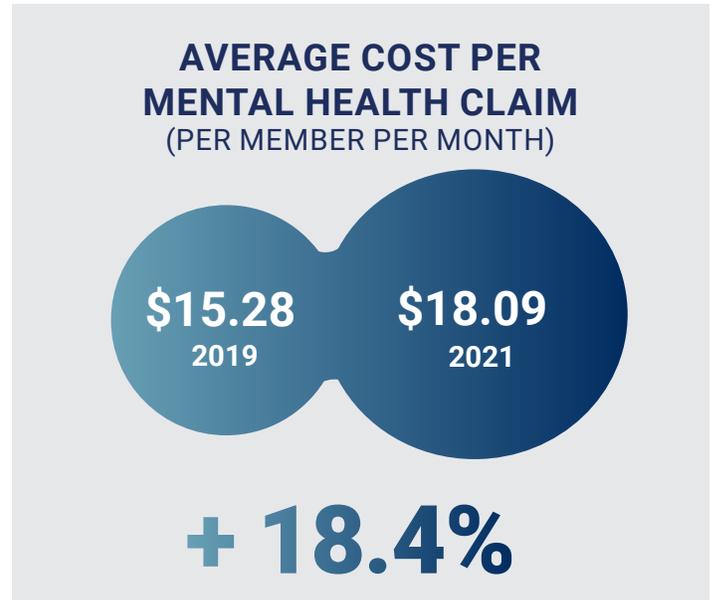
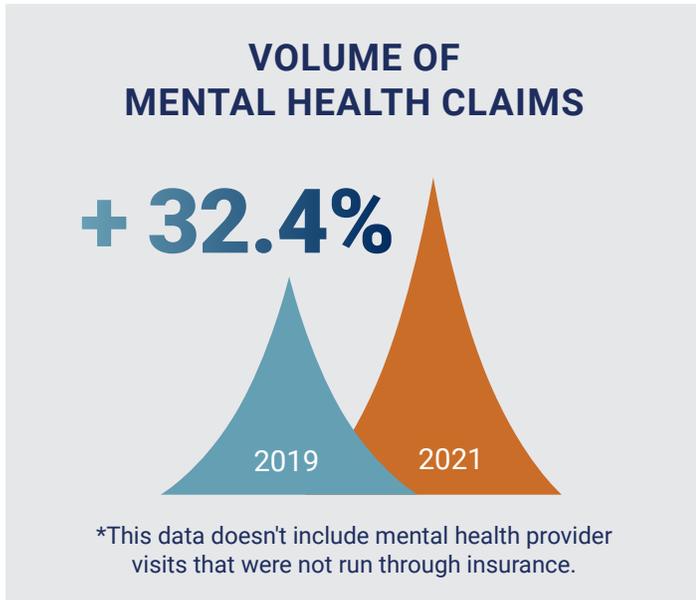


- 49%** Less Energy for Non-Work Activities
- 42%** Less Interest in Socializing with Friends
- 42%** More Trouble Sleeping
- 33%** Increase in Alcohol or Substance Use

Data Source: Limeade

How this Translates to Your Health Plan

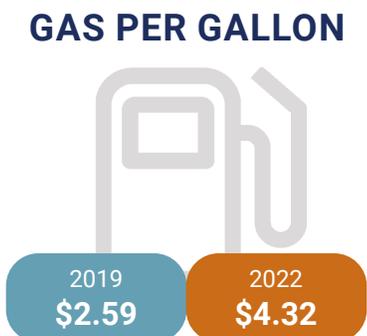
We saw the increase in employee stress, anxiety and depression directly reflected in claims data. From 2019 to 2021, the volume of mental health claims in our book of business increased by 32.4%. More specifically, psychiatric claims increased by 35.3% and substance abuse claims increased by 17.8%. The average cost per mental health claim also increased going from \$15.28 in 2019 to \$18.09 in 2021 –an increase of 18.4%.



An Ongoing Battle

With the end of the pandemic (seemingly) in site, mental health issues stemming from the pandemic have begun to plateau. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation's COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor, "about a quarter of adults say they have basically returned to normal. Unfortunately, additional stressors are beginning to arise."

Rising prices at the gas pump, increasing costs for consumer goods and the looming possibility of a recession are resulting in an increase in financial-related stress.



How Employers Can Help

Since the start of the pandemic, the demand for mental health services has grown exponentially. Yet, the stigma of mental illness, therapy and outreach can be a barrier for employees. Employers play a crucial role in providing employees with easy access to care and resources to help address their population's mental health challenges. According to Lyra's recent Workplace Mental Health Trends Forecast, "89% of HR/Benefits leaders said mental health support was a higher priority for their company for the next year".

Investing in mental health solutions can positively impact your health care costs and show your employees that you care about their holistic wellbeing.

We are here to help. HORAN can provide you with a strategy to build your mental health offerings and a roadmap of resources to better support your employees.

Get started today by trying one (or all!) of the options below.

TAP INTO WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE



Many carriers provide mental health tools and resources free of charge. Understand all of the resources available, including your Employee Assistance Program, and market them to your employees. It will go a long way!

PROMOTE VIRTUAL CARE OPTIONS



There are more than 20,000 mental health apps available—with the most popular being Calm and Headspace. These apps provide everything from virtual therapy sessions to guided meditations. Virtual care resources are affordable and convenient options for mental health support.

SEE WHAT'S OUT THERE TO FILL GAPS



HORAN can help you conduct a full market search to evaluate standalone mental health support options and identify a solution that best targets your plan members' specific mental health needs.

HORAN supports the efforts to reduce the stigma around mental illness and increase support for those affected. For more information on how you can better support your employees' mental health, contact your HORAN representative at 800.544.8306.