## 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.

May 2025

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## Employee Benefits | Closing Access Gaps in Women's Care

You might be spending more on health care than ever. But if employees can't get the care they need—when and how they need it—it's not working. And for many, especially women, that's still the case.

Women between the ages of 25 and 54 make up 65% of today's workforce, yet many report struggling to access the proper support.

From fertility and maternity to mental health and menopause, the system doesn't always meet them where they are. The result? Delayed care, worsening conditions, and higher costs down the line.

### A Benefits Strategy That Reflects Reality

The goal isn't just to offer more—it's to provide better. And better means designing benefits that match the actual lives of your workforce.

Women are 35% more likely than men to skip or delay care, often because services aren't accessible, affordable, or tailored to them.

That includes everything from maternity care to chronic condition support to mental health, especially in underserved or high-demand areas. Flexible options, such as virtual counseling, mobile-first tools, and integrated behavioral support within primary care, can go a long way in helping employees juggle work and family.

### Bring Care to the Full Journey

Modern care must encompass the whole spectrum. That means going beyond annual checkups and offering support through all of life's transitions—from fertility, pregnancy, postpartum recovery, menopause to chronic conditions.

Uncoordinated menopause care increases the cost per case by 47%, and the ripple effect on absenteeism and productivity is equally steep.

When employers offer targeted programs, whether it's doula access or evidence-based fertility care—they're not just doing the right thing for their employees; they're also doing the right thing for their teams. They're reducing long-term costs and improving outcomes.

And it's not just physical health. Mental health challenges often intensify during these transitions. Whether it's postpartum depression or anxiety linked to infertility, women benefit from integrated care models that treat the whole person, not just the episode.

### What to Look at Now
As we move through 2025, it's worth asking: Are your benefits built for the people who use them the most? Are they flexible enough to meet employees where they are, and are they proactive enough to prevent minor issues from becoming costly claims? Investing in better access—especially for women—isn't just a nice to have. It's a more innovative way to control costs and attract and retain top talent.

## Workplace Culture | Scaling AI Without Sinking Morale

AI is becoming a daily part of work—but for many employees, that shift feels unclear, fast, and unsettling. When new tools show up without explanation, they don't just disrupt processes, they disrupt trust.

> [42% of CIOs say AI and machine learning are their top technology priority for 2025, which means adoption isn't slowing down anytime soon.](#)

However, successful implementation is more than just infrastructure. It's about helping people understand where they fit.

### Change Without Clarity Creates Anxiety
[AI anxiety is real—and growing.](#) When employees aren't sure how AI fits into their work or whether it will replace parts of their role, stress rises. Even tools designed to help can trigger fear when they're introduced without a clear explanation. People wonder: Is this going to change my job? Am I being evaluated by a system I don't understand? Will decisions be made without my input?

Without answers, that unease turns into resistance. And when AI feels like something is being done to employees instead of with them, it doesn't just create confusion, it erodes trust.

### Lead With Transparency and Intent
Start by explaining the *why*. Why are you introducing this tool? How will it help? What will still need a human touch? Employees don't need every detail, but they do need clarity on how AI will support—not replace—their role.

Check in often. Ask what's working and what's creating friction. Ensure employees know where to direct questions or concerns and establish channels where feedback can be shared without fear of being perceived as resistant to change.

### Morale Is a Metric Too

Efficiency is important. So is culture. When employees understand how AI is being used—and feel included in that process—they're more likely to trust it. They're also more likely to use it responsibly and creatively.

AI might be the newest tool on the job, but your people are still your greatest asset. Treat the rollout as a cultural shift, not just a technical one—and morale will follow.

## Dear HR Manager | Shaping More Thoughtful Use of AI

How do I stop managers from misusing AI tools?

We encouraged managers to utilize AI platforms to support tasks such as outlining emails, drafting project plans, and conducting preliminary research. However, I'm now seeing managers use them for everything—from performance reviews to disciplinary notes. Some are even pasting sensitive data into public-facing chat tools.

I want to encourage innovation, but we need boundaries. How do I establish guardrails without coming across as overly controlling or micro-managing?

*– Concerned, Not Controlling*

Dear Concerned,

You're asking the right question—and at the relevant time.

When AI tools first rolled out, people often swung between overusing them and being afraid to try them at all.

### Start With Purpose

AI should help people work smarter. Make it clear which tasks AI can support (like brainstorming or outlining) versus where human care, tone, and judgment are required (like coaching, discipline, or anything involving sensitive data).

Offer examples. What's okay? What's not okay? And when in doubt, remind teams that anything confidential or personal still deserves a human touch.

### Establish *Red Zones*

There's no need to create 50 new policies—but a short list of AI *red zones* can help. Things like performance evaluations, private employee issues, or anything legally sensitive should be off-limits for automated tools. Even if the tool is secure, the perception matters.

AI tools are trained on extensive datasets and may not always accurately reflect your voice, tone, or your company values. It's better to use them as a starting point, not the final draft.

## Invite Feedback and Curiosity

The goal is to build a culture where people feel comfortable experimenting and asking for help when they're unsure. Host a short lunch-and-learn. Collect stories of what's worked (and what hasn't). Curiosity and caution should coexist.

You don't need to control how every tool gets used. But you can help shape the habits that lead to better, more thoughtful use.

*– HR Manager*