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News Notes

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EMPLOYER MEETING: GENEIA

AUGUST 24, 2021 – EMPLOYER MEETING

On August 24th, Laura (Syron) Paley, manager, Geneia Client Executive Team, and Mackenzie DeBoer, RN, BSN, MPH, senior clinical transformational consultant, virtually met with the LVBCH Coalition and employer groups to discuss two topics:

COVID-19 Return to Work

As return to the workplace looms, employees' mental well-being is in jeopardy. Rates of stress, anxiety, depressed mood and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) risk are on the rise once again. Two-thirds of American workers say they feel somewhat or extremely anxious about returning to work.

At the same time, return to work has employees anxious about exposure to COVID-19, less flexibility and commuting to work and is bumping up against the increasing prevalence of the Delta variant and rising COVID-19 cases. 'Reentry anxiety" takes two forms:

- Safety concerns
- Social interactions

Ideas for a seamless transition back to work include:

- Reorient workers back to the office.
- Be cognizant of health and safety protocols while sharing with employees.
- Set clear expectations for employees.
- Support individual personal boundaries.
- Continue to be data-driven in making decisions about the health and safety of your employees.

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Biosimilars

Biosimilars are the fastest-growing class of therapeutic products in the U.S. They are highly similar, based on characteristics such as purity, chemical identity and bioactivity, and have no clinically meaningful differences in terms of safety, purity, and potency. They are safe and effective medications for treating illnesses such as:

- Chronic skin disease (i.e. psoriasis)
- Bowel diseases (i.e. irritable bowel syndrome)
- Arthritis

Biosimilars offer additional treatment options, and potentially lower costs. It's estimated that the use of biosimilars could lead to a $44 billion reduction in direct spending on biologic drugs from 2014 to 2024 or about 4 percent of total biologic spending over the same period.

The FDA has approved 29 biosimilars, up from 11 in 2018:

- Therapeutic proteins (e.g., filgrastim)
- Monoclonal antibodies (e.g., adalimumab)
- Vaccines (e.g., influenza and tetanus)

There are numerous challenges to the adoption of biosimilars within the U.S. healthcare system, including:

- Payer coverage
- Preference of reference biologic due to reimbursement
- Provider buy-in
- Patient buy-in
- Multiple biosimilars
- Off-label use
- Skinny label
- Lack of interchangeability data
- Operational infrastructure
- Chronic vs. short-term use

Key takeaways about biosimilars:

- There are more than 83 biosimilars in development and registered with the FDA for 38 different biologics.
- There is some hesitancy, but implementing adoption strategies could lead to major cost savings.
- More education is needed to help patients, providers and payers buy into the clinical and financial benefits of biosimilars.
- Having more real-world, adoption expertise will help facilitate faster adoption of biosimilars.