

MIGRAINE AT WORK

To Whom It May Concern:

Migraine disease is a serious, often debilitating neurological condition affecting 39 million Americans – and notably, about one in four women. If left untreated, the disease can have serious health consequences, including depression, anxiety and chronic disease, and may result in added healthcare costs.

At *Migraine at Work*, a new project of the Headache and Migraine Policy forum, we believe a lack of understanding about the effects of migraine disease in the workplace hurts employee productivity and the health of millions of migraine sufferers across the country. Too often, limited education and awareness leads to unintended stigma and bias against employees suffering from migraine disease. Consequently, this stigma is a factor inhibiting women's progress in the workplace.

However, research shows that helping employees effectively manage their migraines can not only improve their quality of life, it can also improve productivity on the job and their value to employers.

The following page includes a fact sheet about migraine disease and insights about productivity costs. You can find resources – including workplace recommendations, research and more – on our website MigraineatWork.org. Our diverse group of advocacy organizations, representing a broad range of experiences from within the migraine community, developed a series of tools and materials that we hope you take time to explore. We believe that together, we can enact positive changes on this issue that affects so many people and workplaces across the country.

Finally, we are eager to support you and your employees reach their full potential through a deeper understanding of migraine disease. Please don't hesitate to contact us through our website or by emailing contact@migraineatwork.org.

Best,

Paula K. Dumas & Mary Franklin
Chair and Co-Chair, *Migraine at Work* Campaign



MigraineAgain

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Migraine at Work Campaign | *Boosting employee productivity through positive support at work*
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MIGRAINE AT WORK

What Employers Need to Know About Migraine Disease

Topline: Migraine disease has a chronic and often debilitating impact on 39 million Americans, including roughly one in four women. If left untreated, migraine disease can have serious health consequences – including depression, anxiety and chronic disease, as well as result in added healthcare costs. Too often, a lack of education and awareness in the workplace leads to unintended stigma and bias against employees suffering from migraine disease. Yet with positive support at work, employees experiencing migraine disease can maintain a higher quality of life and deliver even stronger value to their employers. Employers interested in building workplaces friendly to women have an opportunity to support appropriate migraine-related care and invest in accommodations for employees.

- 1. Migraine disease is a chronic and sometimes debilitating condition affecting 39 million Americansⁱ – impacting nearly every workplace in the country through absenteeism and lost productivity.**
 - a. Twenty percent of Americans will suffer from migraine disease during their lifetime. Most individuals who suffer from migraine disease experience 1-2 attacks per month, but chronic daily migraine – where individuals suffer at least 15 migraine days per month – impacts more than 4 million people.ⁱⁱ
 - b. More than 90 percent of migraine disease sufferers are unable to work or function normally during their migraine.ⁱⁱⁱ
 - c. Americans between the ages of 35-55 (prime working years) are the cohort most likely to experience migraine disease.^{iv}
 - d. Lack of proper migraine disease care and treatment can lead to downstream economic and medical consequences.
 - i. One-quarter of migraine disease patients suffer from depression.^v
 1. Women with migraines are 41 percent more likely to be depressed than women without a history of migraines.^{vi}
 2. Half of migraine disease patients also have anxiety.^{vii}
 - ii. Additionally, individuals with migraine disease are at higher risk of stroke, epilepsy, heart disease and GI-related concerns.^{viii}
 - e. Migraine disease can result in absenteeism and lost productivity.^{ix}
 - i. Employees treated for migraine also had an average of 2.2 more sick days per year – a total of 113 million lost work days in the U.S.^x
 - ii. Employees who take short-term disability leave as a result of migraine disease miss an average of 38 work days per episode.^{xi}
 - iii. Direct and indirect costs of migraine disease total more than \$36 billion annually in the U.S.^{xii,xiii}
- 2. Migraine disease disproportionately and dramatically impacts women of working age, yet many women living with migraine disease are not receiving the care and workplace support they need to maintain a high quality of life and deliver strong value to their employers.**
 - a. Migraine disease affects roughly one in four women in their lives, making it one of the most common diseases facing women of working age.^{xiv}

MIGRAINE AT WORK

- b. Three-quarters of Americans who experience migraines are women and many women experience a greater frequency of episodes due in part to hormonal changes.^{xv}
- c. While the exact causes of migraine disease are not known, commonly reported triggers include changing one's routine, stressful situations, too much and too little sleep, caffeine, dehydration, certain foods and environmental factors.^{xvi}
- d. Lack of education in the workplace about migraine disease can lead to unintended stigma and bias, as employers are unaware of the serious impact that the disease can have on individuals.^{xvii}

3. Employers interested in building workplaces friendly to women should invest in supporting employees to seek appropriate care and accommodations.

- a. Research shows that helping employees manage their headaches can not only improve their quality of life, it can also improve their productivity on the job and their value to their employers.^{xviii}
- b. Open communication between employers and employees has shown to be effective in addressing migraine disease in the workplace.^{xix}
- c. Common workplace accommodations include limiting noise and lights in the workplace, promoting fragrance-free environments, setting aside a dark, quiet room for employees and considering flexible schedules.^{xx}

ⁱ <https://migraineresearchfoundation.org/about-migraine/migraine-facts/>.

ⁱⁱ <https://migraineresearchfoundation.org/about-migraine/migraine-facts/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://migraineresearchfoundation.org/about-migraine/migraine-facts/>

^{iv} Lipton, RB; Stewart, WF; von Korff, M. 1997. Burden of migraine: societal costs and therapeutic opportunities. Abstract. *Neurology* 48, no. 3:(suppl 3):S4-S9 [PubMed]

^v <https://americanmigrainefoundation.org/resource-library/anxiety-and-depression/>

^{vi} <https://aimedalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Women-with-Migraine-FINAL-ACCESSIBLE-170609.pdf>

^{vii} <https://americanmigrainefoundation.org/resource-library/anxiety-and-depression/>

^{viii} <https://www.health.com/headaches-and-migraines/migraine-pain-depression-stroke>

^{ix} Burton, WN; Conti, DJ; Chen, CY; Shultz, AB; Edington, DW. 2002. The economic burden of lost productivity due to migraine headache: A specific worksite analysis. Abstract. *J Occup Environ Med* 44, no. 6:523-529.

^x <https://www.ibiweb.org/migraine-impacts-employers-in-both-health-care-spend-and-lost-productivity-per-integrated-benefits-institute-study/>

^{xi} <https://www.ibiweb.org/migraine-impacts-employers-in-both-health-care-spend-and-lost-productivity-per-integrated-benefits-institute-study/>

^{xii} <https://www.ajmc.com/compendium/migraine/study-summary-costs-associated-with-migraine-in-the-united-states>

^{xiii} <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29446063>

^{xiv} <https://aimedalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Women-with-Migraine-FINAL-ACCESSIBLE-170609.pdf>

^{xv} <https://migraineresearchfoundation.org/about-migraine/migraine-facts/>

^{xvi} <https://www.migrainetrust.org/about-migraine/trigger-factors/common-triggers/>

^{xvii} <https://aimedalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Women-with-Migraine-FINAL-ACCESSIBLE-170609.pdf>

^{xviii} https://www.nib.org.uk/sites/default/files/Working_for_a_healthier_tomorrow.pdf

^{xix} <https://www.migrainetrust.org/living-with-migraine/coping-managing/migraine-at-work/>

^{xx} <https://www.migrainetrust.org/living-with-migraine/coping-managing/migraine-at-work/>