

WHITEPAPER

Connect Employees to Better Long-term Wellness

When EAPs empower comprehensive wellness, they bring more value to employers and employees.



Supporting employees' mental health is good for business. When workers feel supported and equipped with mental health benefits that meet their needs, it leads to increased productivity, improved physical health and greater success in attracting and retaining top talent. The employee assistance program (EAP) has become a key aspect of employers' well-being strategy, but traditional EAPs don't always produce the expected results. Like any other offering, EAPs are only effective if employees use them—and for a variety of reasons, driving their utilization has been an uphill struggle for employers.

In August and September 2025, Arizent, parent company of Employee Benefit News, surveyed 103 HR/benefits professionals at companies who offer an EAP. This research, conducted on behalf of Teladoc Health, explores what is limiting EAP effectiveness and what employers would like to see change with respect to mental health services offered through these programs. The results show that EAP effectiveness is often hindered by a lack of employee awareness about what they offer, or an inability to access high-quality care in a timely manner.

Traditional EAPs dominate the HR landscape

The flexibility and relative simplicity of EAPs make them a solid strategic cornerstone of many employers' wellness offerings. At their most basic, these programs function as a one-stop shop for mental health support. Just over half of employers (51%) rely on a traditional, standalone EAP provided by an external dedicated vendor to cover eligible employees and families.

Hybrid models allow employers to combine traditional employee assistance services with digital tools like apps, chat, and video counseling, creating a more accessible and integrated experience for employees. These types of programs can be more valuable, as they can function more like a centralized portal connecting employees to multiple wellness offerings. They also can be more resource-intensive for employers.

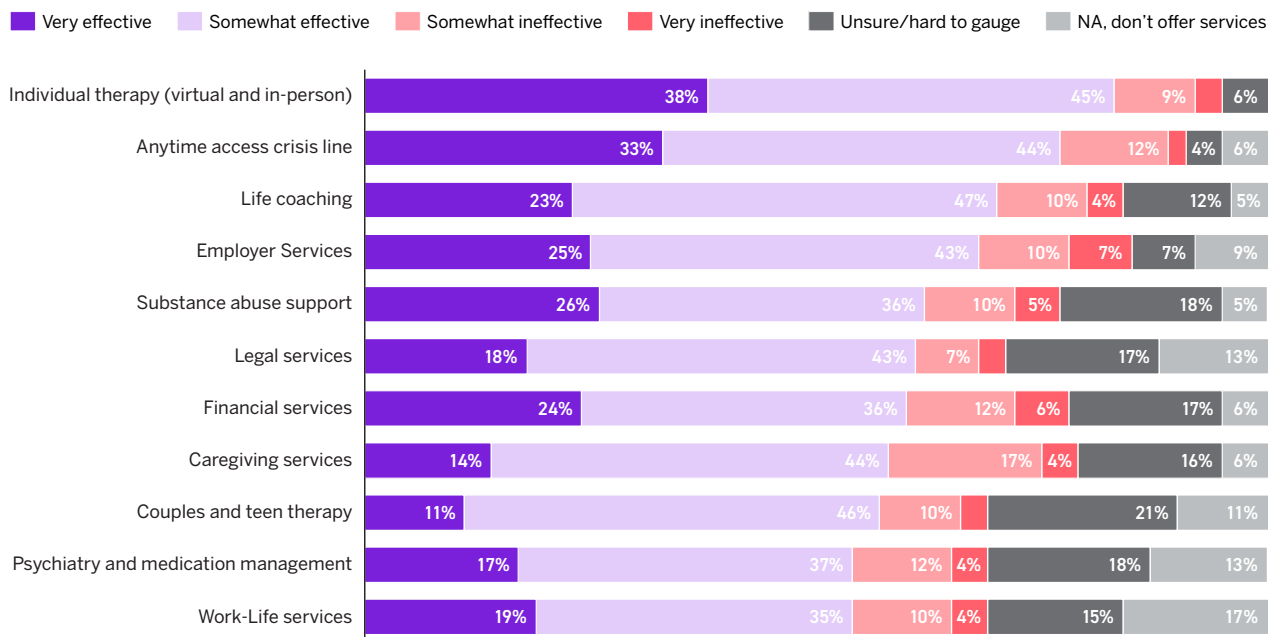
Hybrid models are currently more common among larger companies, which are more likely to have the resources available to integrate them with their other offerings. That extra effort has tended to pay off. While only 22% of employers offer hybrid EAPs, those who do are more likely to demonstrate higher engagement rates.

Other EAP models are less popular, including tech-forward standalone EAPs (12%), bundled models that offer services as part of a group health plan (11%) and internally managed EAPs (4%). The relative popularity of the types of EAPs maps roughly to cost and familiarity. Traditional EAPs allow employers to check the box regarding mental health support with a low-cost offering that’s been around for decades. That longevity doesn’t necessarily mean they’re effective, however. In fact, traditional EAPs often wind up underperforming, underutilized and misunderstood.

EAP effectiveness has been limited

Utilization rates for EAPs vary widely. Only 38% of employers enjoy high utilization. Another 37% of respondents report moderate utilization, leaving 25% with low or very low utilization rates. Consistent with this pattern of utilization, employers generally find EAPs effective—but there’s room for improvement. Nearly half (43%) consider EAPs only somewhat effective, compared to 33% who find them very effective. That level of effectiveness varies depending on the type of support offered via the EAP (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Effectiveness of EAPs varies by need



Data labels not shown for values less than 4%
 Source: Arizent/Employee Benefits News, 2025

Employers rate EAPs most effective at providing individual therapy or access to a crisis line—straightforward and easily understood benefits. However, the majority of respondents still say EAPs are at best only somewhat effective in these areas. Offerings more closely tailored to specific needs, such as legal or financial services, tend to fare worse: only a quarter of respondents at most find them very effective.

Low and inconsistent utilization of an EAP hurts its effectiveness and poses a challenge for HR leaders as they attempt to justify the impact of their investments. Worse, a sizeable number of respondents (15%) indicate they don’t know how effective their EAP is. Without stronger engagement and measurable outcomes, it’s difficult for benefits managers to position an EAP as a strategic driver of employee well-being.

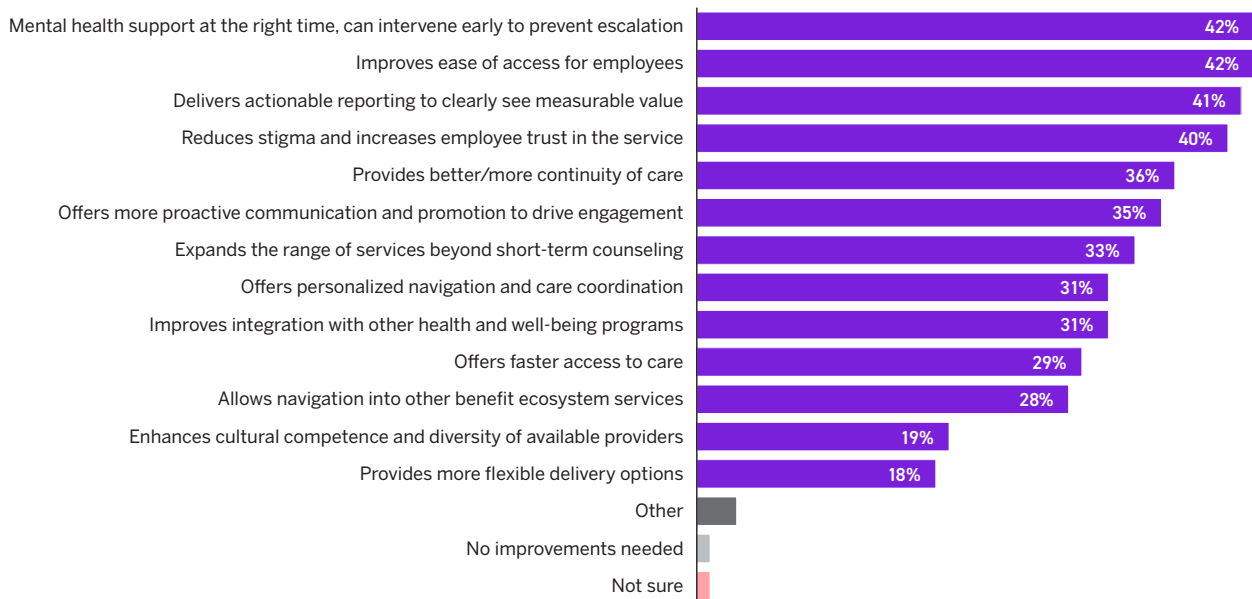
“ Utilization is easy to measure, but it can’t tell the full story of a benefit’s effectiveness,” says Matt Sopcich, Senior Vice President, General Manager of Mental Health Services at Teladoc Health. **“If employers lack the metrics they need to quantify a benefit’s value—to employee wellbeing and their operation—they can’t make fully informed decisions about what to offer.”**

EAPs often fall short when it comes to connecting employees to the right care at the right time

Low utilization (52%) and lack of awareness about EAP resources (43%) are the top factors limiting the effectiveness of EAP programs. According to employees, difficulty accessing services and long wait times are a persistent issue with EAPs—and one that could put a damper on utilization. Employee feedback also suggests employees don’t take EAPs for granted. They appreciate the fact that these programs exist, which in turn suggests they are open to using their EAP provided they can get access to the care they need when they need it.

Benefits leaders see a variety of ways to make EAP offerings more effective. Providing easy, confidential access to mental health care when employees need it is a key concern. Notably, improving HR’s ability to measure the value of care delivered also stands out toward the top of the list. While EAPs hold great promise and employees clearly value them, realizing their full potential requires making them easier to navigate, which, in turn, would improve access to timely support (see figure 2).

Figure 2: EAP offerings could improve across a number of areas



Data labels not shown for values less than 4%
 Source: Arizent/Employee Benefits News, 2025

Integrating mental health benefits to maximize accessibility

As expectations about employer support for mental health and wellbeing continue to evolve, benefits leaders have an opportunity to rethink what they offer as well as how they deliver it. Integrating services into a single, accessible platform with navigation services to guide employees to what they need can help improve awareness and access across multiple benefit offerings. It can also enable clearer measurement of the impact an EAP makes across different types of care and employee needs.

Vendors offering a consolidated platform encompassing variety of easily accessed options—including mental health support alongside resources for work-life stress, physical health and overall wellbeing—can provide exactly this type of front door to care. A single point of entry means employees know exactly where to go to get help, regardless of what they need. That help can take a lot of forms, so ensuring employees get directed to the right services to address their specific needs can also make a big difference in the program's overall effectiveness.



We try to make it as diverse as possible to meet folks where they are, whether it's virtually, telephonic, chat, or in person. We provide training to managers on how to create an environment that promotes safe spaces and safe dialogue."

— HR Senior Manager,

2,500-4,999 benefits eligible employees

The most effective EAPs are more than just a front door. They also guide people to the right level of support quickly and seamlessly. Employers should look for programs that include 24/7 navigational guidance that can help assess each employee's unique needs and direct them to the most appropriate, personalized support and resources—making access seamless and effective.

Some of the difficulty employers have in addressing mental health and wellness comes from the breadth of clinical ground those areas cover. Employees may face anything from mild stress or anxiety to more severe clinical conditions, such as depression. And they may face those conditions for a variety of reasons. While short-term counseling can be helpful, it's not always the most appropriate way to address more severe or longer-term needs.

To ensure the best outcomes, EAPs should offer access to the right intervention for an employee's level of need—whether therapy, coaching, psychiatry or digital tools—with the overarching goal of building resilience and improving wellbeing. Continuity of care is equally important: once engaged, employees who require ongoing support should be able to continue seamlessly. That means coverage should include care that extends beyond traditional EAP session limits by allowing employees to transition to health insurance coverage or affordable out-of-pocket models through the same platform.

Employers need actionable data to make benefits decisions effectively. Utilization is a limited metric for assessing the effectiveness of an EAP. Like other forms of medical care, mental healthcare can provide measurable clinical benefits. Vendors that measure both utilization and outcomes can provide employers with the information they need to assess the value of their EAP, as well as its ability to deliver measurable impact for employees and for the organization itself.

"Benefits managers need to think in terms of a variety of offerings that meet employee needs in measurable ways," says Sopcich. "The more integrated those offerings are, the easier it is for employees to get access to that care easily and quickly in one place, whether it comes from their EAP or other health or medical benefits."

Methodology

This research was conducted online in August and September 2025 among 103 HR/benefits professionals at companies who offer an employee assistance program (EAP) at their company.



About Teladoc Health

Teladoc Health is the global leader in virtual care. The company is delivering and orchestrating care across patients, care providers, platforms, and partners—transforming virtual care into a catalyst for how better health happens. Through our relationships with health plans, employers, providers, health systems and consumers, we are enabling more access, driving better outcomes, extending provider capacity and lowering costs.

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