The Disability Disconnect

Income is critical to most employees’ financial security, yet employees rarely think about how an illness or accident puts their income at risk. Learn the facts about the causes and odds of experiencing an income-interrupting disability.

### Short on guidance.

Many workers lack information about how to protect themselves from an income-interrupting disability.

- **Only 38%** of employees said they fully understood the key points of their employer’s disability plans.1
- **48%** of employees said they lacked enough information about purchasing disability insurance.2

### Weighing the odds.

The chance of missing work for three months or longer as a result of illness or accident is far higher than most employees realize, especially when lifestyle, profession and other factors are considered.

- **The percentages indicate the odds for a 35-year-old.**
- **More than 25%** of today’s 20-year-olds will become disabled before they retire.1

### Time is money.

A long term disability can have a devastating effect on a person’s financial situation.

- **More than 65%** of employees could not pay their bills for more than a year without an income.1
- A disability lasting 2.6 years translates to 135 weekly paychecks missed.
- **However, the average group long term disability claim lasts 2.6 years.**1

### Causes for concern.

Employees may underestimate their risks because they don’t understand the causes.

- **Percentage of employees who rated each cause for disability as “very” or “somewhat likely.”**
  - Serious accident: 71%
  - Stroke: 45%
  - Cancer: 43%
  - Heart disease: 40%
  - Paralysis: 32%
  - Injuries at work: 32%

### Top five causes of new long term disability claims in 2012.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muscle/Bone Disorders</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Disorders</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All others</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Women’s bundled risks.

Women comprised more than half of new long term disability claims in 2012. Pregnancy-related claims were the biggest contributor to the growth in women’s claims.

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### No time to waste.

Workers’ livelihoods could change in an instant—and frequently do.

- **Approximately every 7 seconds, a working-age American suffers a disabling injury or illness that will last for at least one month.**14

Visit DisabilityCanHappen.org to learn more.

The Council for Disability Awareness can help educate about the financial impact a disability can have on wage earners and their families.
The Council for Disability Awareness (CDA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating the American public about the risk and consequences of experiencing an income-interrupting illness or injury. The CDA engages in research, communications and educational activities that provide information and helpful resources to wage earners, employers, financial advisors, consultants and others who are concerned about the personal and financial impact a disability can have on wage earners and their families. The CDA consists of 20 member insurance companies that together represent more than 75 percent of the individual and group commercial disability insurance market.

Sources:
1. CDA 2013 Employer Disability Awareness Study, p. 10
2. CDA 2013 Employer Disability Awareness Study, p. 11
3. CDA 2013 Employer Disability Awareness Study, p. 6
5. WhatsMyPDQ.org estimate based on a 35-year-old
6. CDA 2010 Consumer Disability Awareness Study, p. 10
10. CDA 2010 Consumer Disability Awareness Study, p. 7
11. Employees could make multiple selections
14. America’s Disability Counter, DisabilityCounter.org