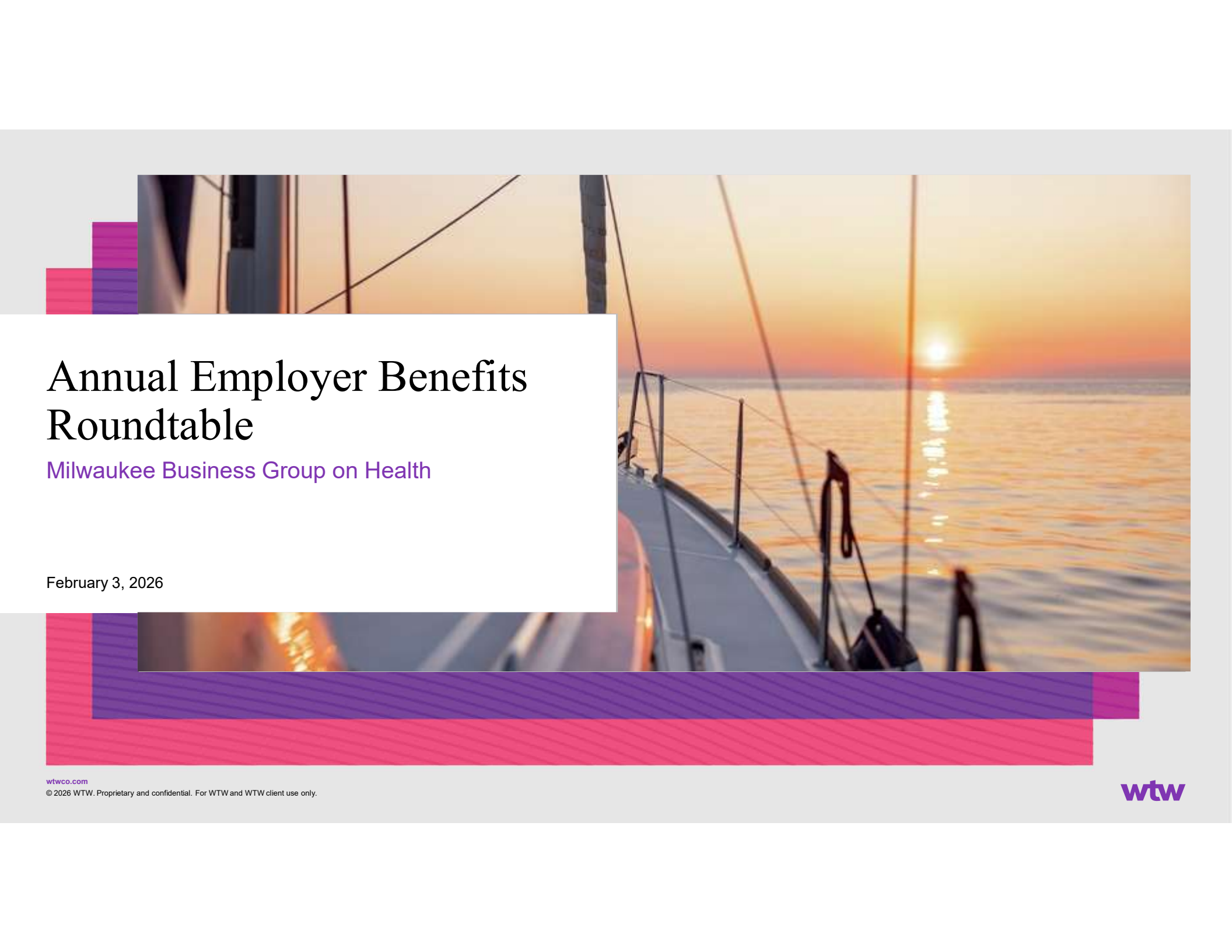




Annual Employer Benefits Roundtable

Milwaukee Business Group on Health

February 3, 2026

wtwco.com

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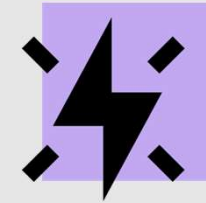
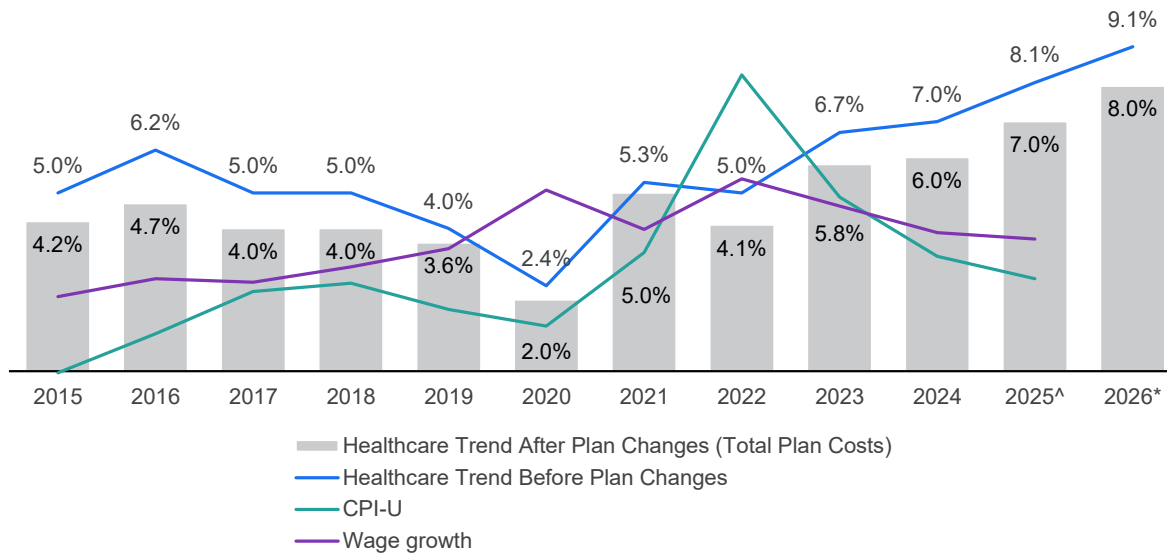
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Healthcare cost increases are at the highest point in over a decade and significantly outpace wage growth

Cost pressure



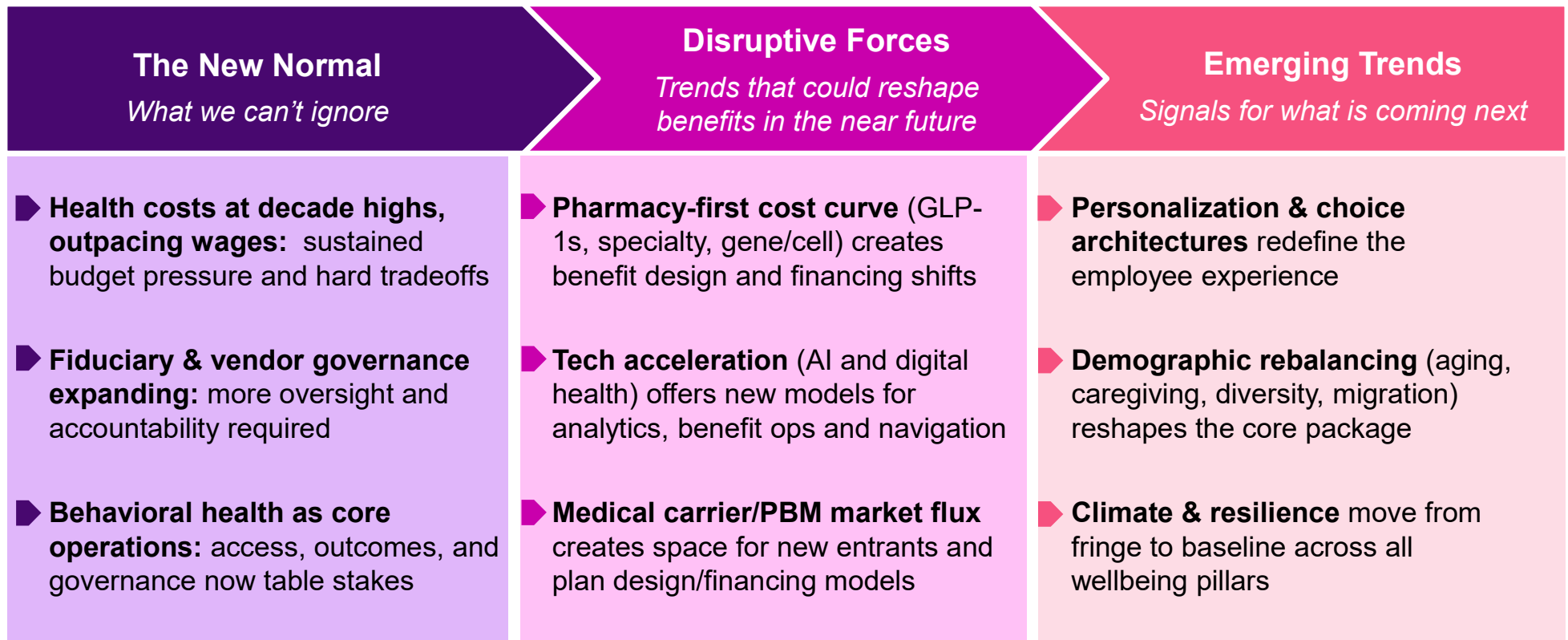
73% of companies are feeling more cost pressure today than at any point in the past 10 years

Note: Percentages of healthcare trend are median numbers. ^Expected; *Projected.

Sources: WTW 2025 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey; Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), Current Employment Statistics (CES).

Health and welfare benefit trends for 2026 and beyond

The new normal, the forces that disrupt, and the signals for what is next



Health care trend – what is in your control?

Components of Trend

Utilization	- Services per 1,000 - High-cost claimant prevalence	}
Technology	- Technological advances - Prescription drug innovation	
Excess Inflation	- Additional inflation due to medical services - Government payer program cost shifts	
CPI Inflation	- General inflation - Wage increases	

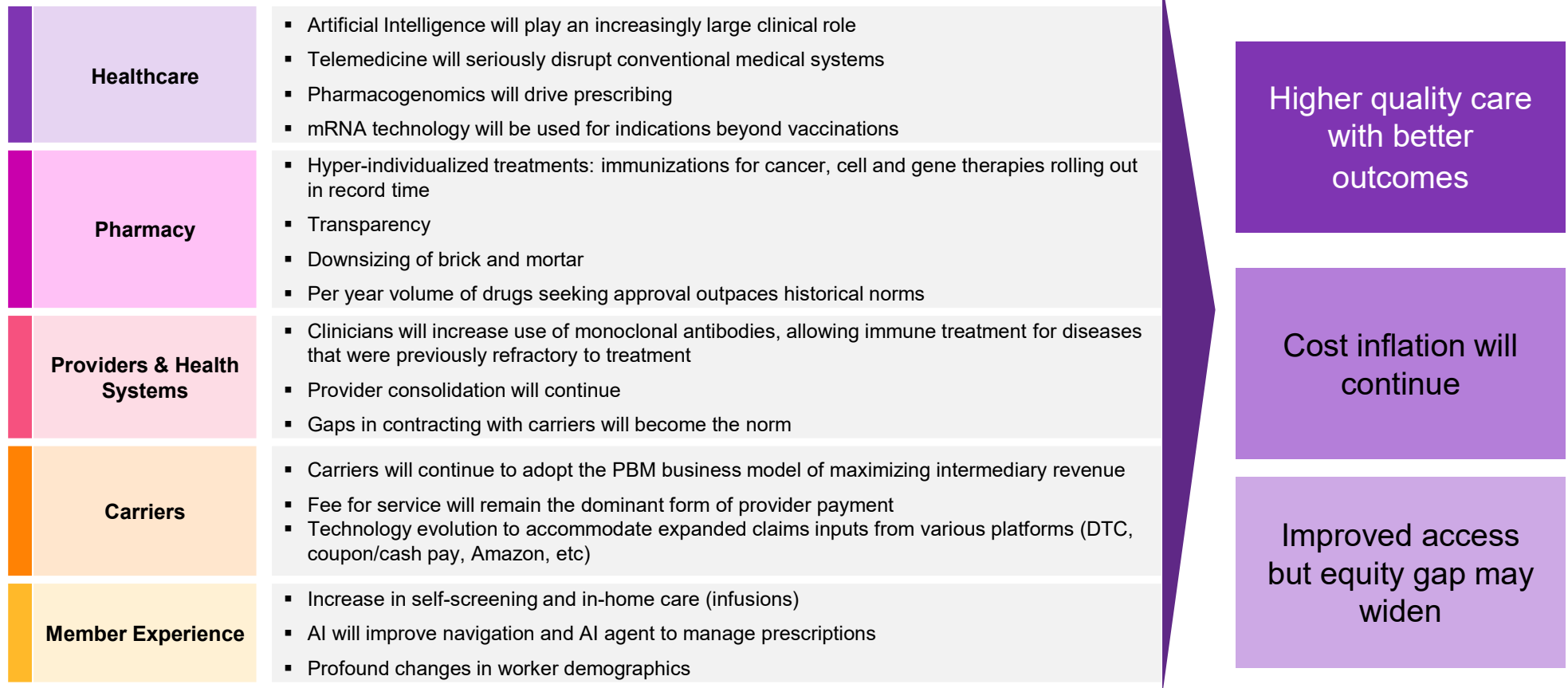
You can influence these components of health care trend – typically 1-2 percentage points of total health care trend

Market forces outside ABC Corp's control – typically 3-4 percentage points of total health care trend

Trend components	Current economic conditions	WTW initial capital market assumptions	WTW normative capital market assumptions	}
CPI Inflation	3.00%	3.00%	2.50%	
Excess Inflation	1.00%	1.00%	1.50%	
Technology	3.00%	2.50%	1.50%	
Utilization	1.00%	1.00%	0.50%	
Total	8.00%	7.50%	6.00%	

Expect the long-term trend to be a minimum of 4%

Future of Healthcare: Ecosystem



Cost pressures are driving employers to consider disruptive changes

Companies consider disruptive changes

Organization's top priorities over the next three years

#1	Company medical costs	95%
#2	Company pharmacy costs	85%
#3	Affordability for employees	82%
#4	Employee wellbeing	48%
#5	Employee experience	46%
#6	Healthcare delivery	37%
#7	Program offerings	36%
#8	Compliance and transparency	33%
#9	Analytics, forecasting and risk assessment	24%

Note: Percentages indicate ranked "top 5".
Source: WTW 2025 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey.



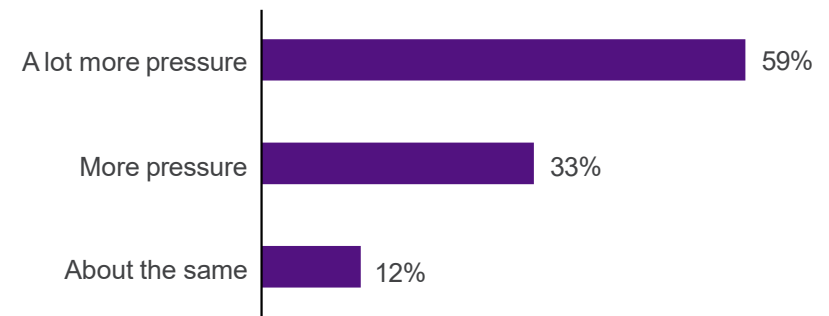
1 in 3 think it is necessary to make **disruptive changes** to healthcare program in the next three years

Past three years
14%

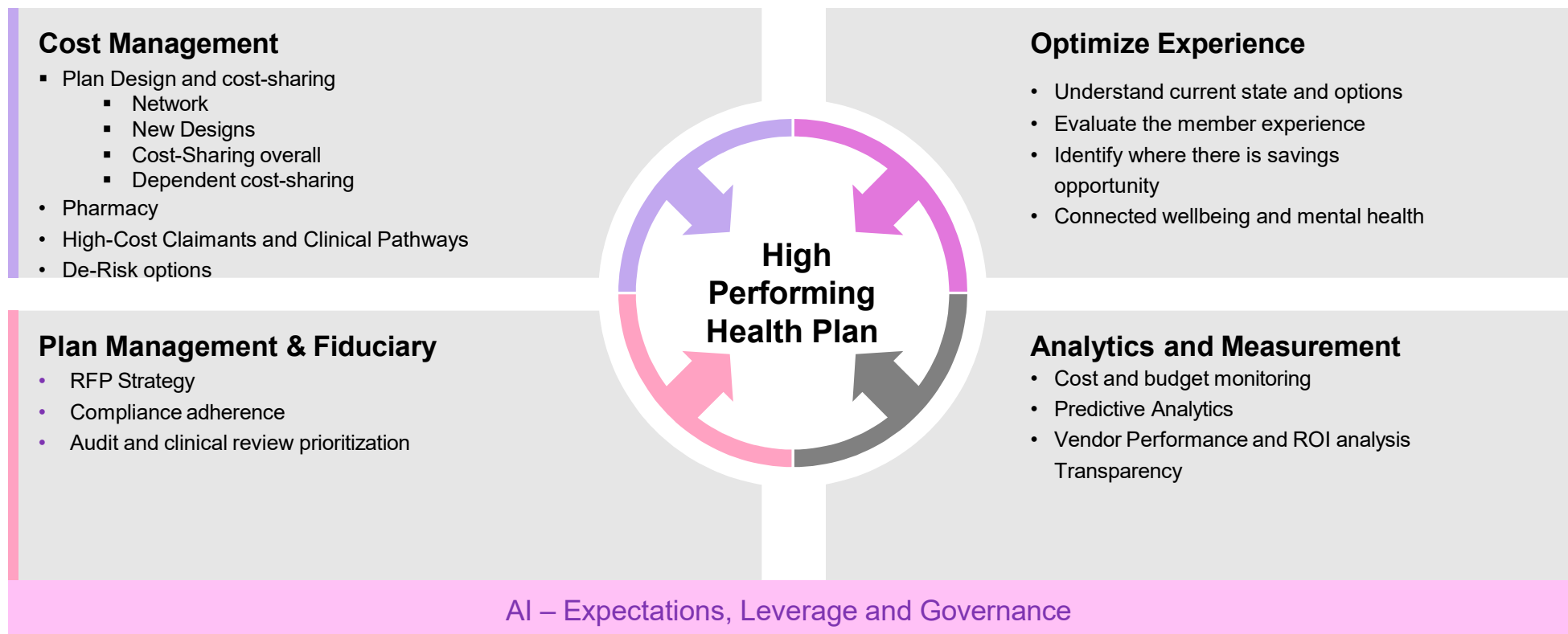


Next three years
34%

Organizations with higher cost pressure are more likely to make disruptive changes over the next three years



Near term strategic levers



Levers to lower healthcare spending: Disruptive Changes



Participation



Plan design and cost sharing



Population health programs



Carrier and PBM efficiency

Disruptive Changes

- Eliminate spousal coverage/spousal surcharge/spousal incentive plan
- PT coverage restrictions

- Reference-based pricing
- Restrict formulary
- Remove drug classes (e.g., GLP-1 coverage for obesity)
- Narrow or high-performance medical/Rx networks Only
- Restrict site of service
- Virtual-first plans
- Restrict/remove OON
- Mandatory COE
- 100% of cost increases will get passed to the member
- 100% pass through cost sharing for dental and vision

- Increase prior authorization
- Genetic testing management
- Incent "effective" coverage (e.g., FIT versus colonoscopy)
- Enhanced case management
- Eliminate wellbeing incentives or shift to DC design
- Carve-out medical side of Rx solutions

- Direct provider contracts
- Alternative Rx pricing models
- Shift to TPA adoption
- Move away from big 3 PBMs
- Hybrid centers of excellence (COE) program

Levers to lower healthcare spending: Incremental Impact



Participation



Plan design and cost sharing



Population health programs



Carrier and PBM efficiency

Incremental Impact & Plan Management

- Dependent audits

- Cost shift: premium/out-of-pocket (OOP) cost increases, coinsurance versus copay
- Rx copay maximizer or accumulator
- Option for Narrow or high-performance medical/Rx networks
- Optional COE
- Managed care (e.g., PCP required)

- Re-bid, consolidate or eliminate underperforming point solutions
- Telemedicine
- Onsite/Near-site
- Expert opinion
- Navigation/Concierge
- Pharmacy navigation
- Cell and gene therapy programs
- Clinical point solutions survive but continue to consolidate
- Shift towards dedicated models for UM and CM

- Re-bid carrier or PBM
- Direct provider contracts
- Alternative Rx pricing models
- Payment integrity audit
- Market checks
- Employer group purchasing coalition (Rx or Rx + Med)
- ASO or level-funding

Balancing the employee experience with savings strategies



Healthy to managed care

80% of the population/20% of the cost



Medically fragile

20% of the population/80% of the cost

Awareness, engagement

Navigation portals

Spoke and hub technology

Decision support tools

Personalized communication

Access

Transparency tools

At home screening

Multi-modality service platforms (digital and telephonic)

Objective advocacy support

Virtual medicine

Robust mental health solution and integration

Support and empowerment

- Dedicated service support
- Modernized performance guarantees
- Emphasis of physical focused wellness
- Commitment to preventative

- Dedicated service support
- Dedicated clinical management (CCMU)
- Optimal clinical point solutions
- Navigation and advocacy
- Financial wellness support

- High touch disability and caregiving support
- Tailored communication and portals on disease state

AI is also transforming the delivery of healthcare



Full speed ahead

Healthcare systems already deploying AI

- Medical ambient documentation tools (aka transcription)
- Triage
- Back-office administration
- Telehealth and remote patient monitoring



Full speed ahead

Human oversight to address disparities and help members overcome identified barriers

- Patient advocacy and navigation
- Identification and outreach
- Delivery of personalized recommendations



Extreme caution

Human-led care will remain prioritized for

- Patients with complex clinical needs
- Patients with clinically sensitive diagnoses
- End-of-life care
- Informed consent process

Strategy Discussion



- ☐ What top areas are you focusing on for this year and future years?
- ☐ How are you working with finance and leadership on financial monitoring?

Plan Design

Current health care plan design: what needs to be fixed

Employee perspective

28%



Employees delayed care

2X



More likely to be on the wrong track for managing physical and mental health if delayed care

42%



Of employees who delayed care are struggling financially

45%+



Abandonment rate of drugs when out-of-pocket costs exceed \$125

Employer perspective¹

45%



Increase in prevalence of claims over \$100K since 2019

\$9,200



Largest 2025 OOP maximum allowed under the ACA. Rising to \$10,150 in 2026.

33%



Increase in members exceeding a \$9,200 OOP maximum since 2019²

\$300



Annual increase in per-member cost-share necessary to offset increase in employer costs exceeding \$9,200 OOPM

Sources: 2024 WTW Global Benefits Attitudes Survey, United States Full Time
<https://www.iqvia.com/insights/the-iqvia-institute/reports-and-publications/reports/medicine-spending-and-affordability-in-the-us>

¹ Calculations from WTW's HealthMaps software utilizing claims continuance tables developed from historic Truven MarketScan database data

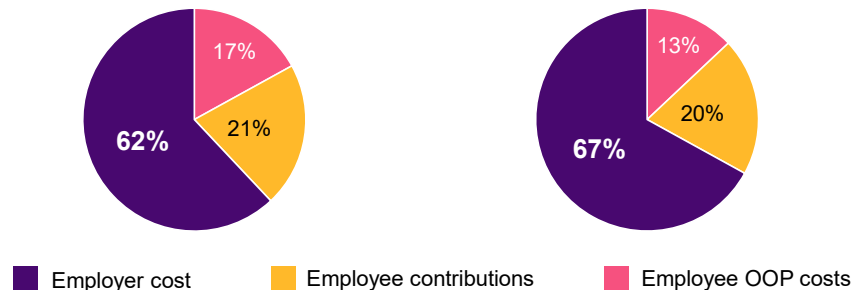
² Assuming a \$2,000 deductible and 20% member coinsurance

Employers have responded to these trends by largely absorbing the cost increase, and contribution strategies need to be revisited

Employers have absorbed plan design leveraging by taking on a higher share of total costs

2019 Health Care Total Cost Share:
\$8,008 employer net cost

2025 Health Care Total Cost Share:
\$10,710 employer net cost



Employer subsidies are higher for spouses due to using premium cost-share strategies versus defined contribution strategies

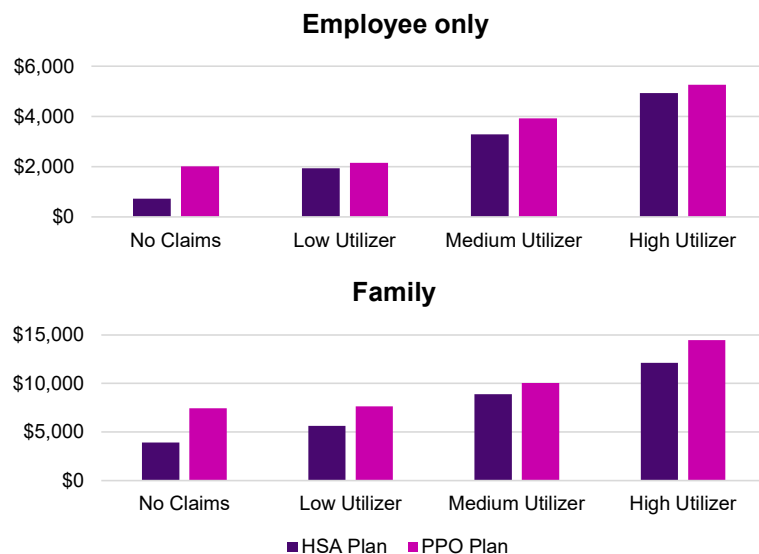
Employer subsidies – 4-tier rates	2019	2025
Employee only	\$4,665	\$6,600
Spouse	\$5,215	\$7,240
% Difference	12%	9%

Modernizing plan designs in 2025+ prioritizes financial protection for members, cost-sharing before the deductible for high value services, and a re-balanced cost-share

Sources: 2019 and 2026 WTW Healthcare Financial Benchmarks Survey: Consumer Goods with 5,000+ employees

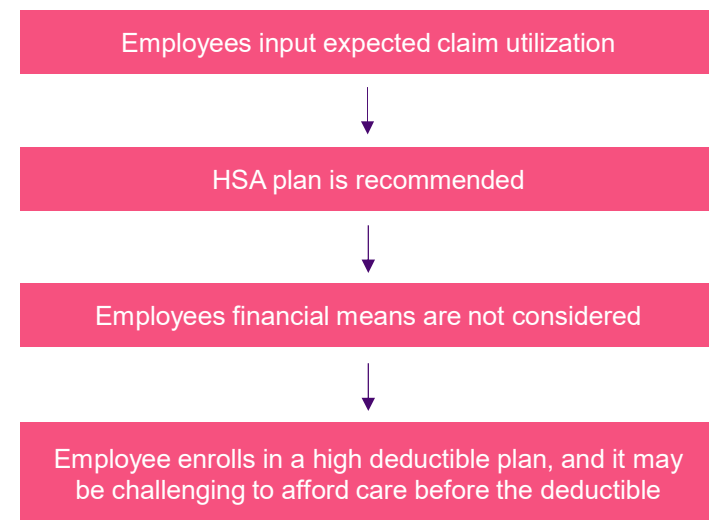
The linkage between health care plan design, contribution strategy and decision support

Employee out-of-pocket costs: 2024 benchmark HDHP and PPO plan/contributions¹



The average HSA plan is better for all employees based on how the plans are currently designed and subsidized

Decision support tools based only on expected claims utilization combined with misaligned design leads to suboptimal enrollment decisions

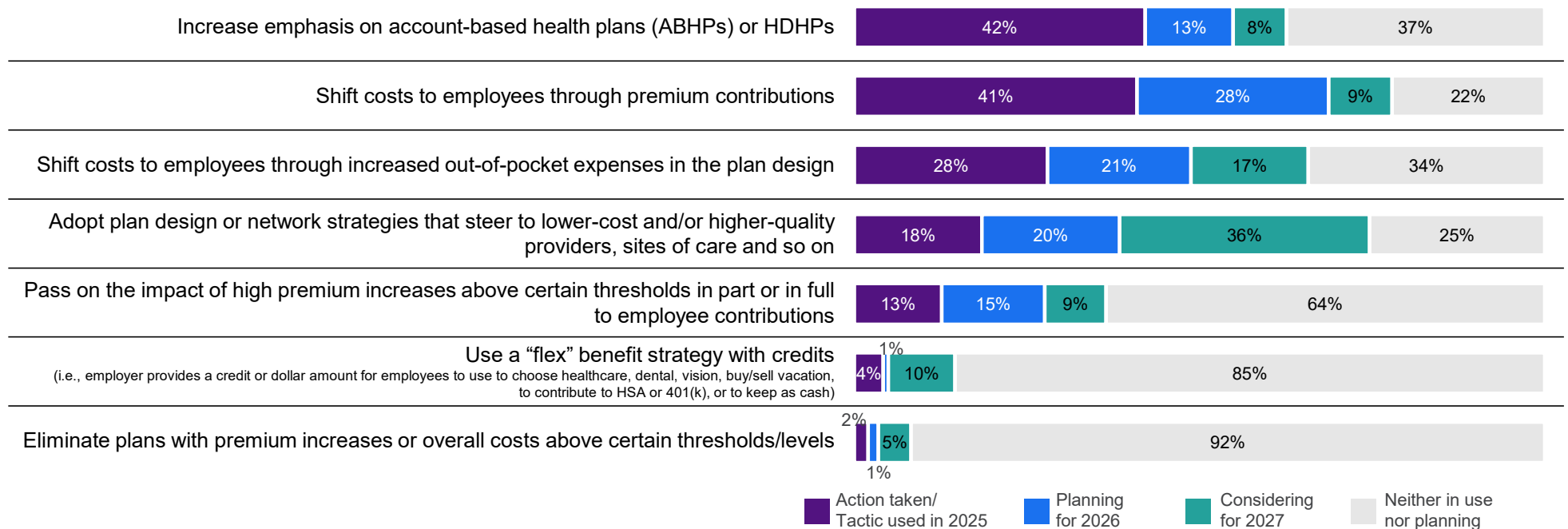


¹Based on WTW 2024 Health Care Financial Benchmarks Survey average design and employee contributions
- Claims utilization scenarios and assumptions are in the Appendix

Actions taken on plan design and subsidization



Subsidization and Designs: What actions has your organization taken or plan to take for healthcare contributions, premiums and benefit designs?

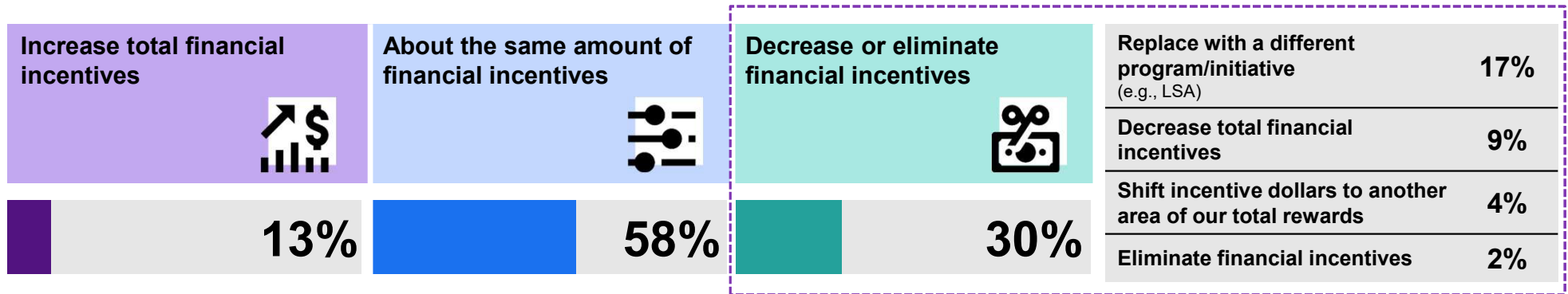


Note: Percentages may not sum up to 100% due to rounding.

Source: WTW 2025 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey.

Increasingly, companies are reducing or eliminating wellbeing incentive programs

 How do you expect your wellbeing financial incentive program to change in the next three years? (n = 200)



Note: Percentages may not sum up to 100% due to rounding.

Sample: Companies that offer financial rewards or penalties based on program participation or biometric outcomes.

Source: WTW 2025 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey.

The traditional health plan market is in flux

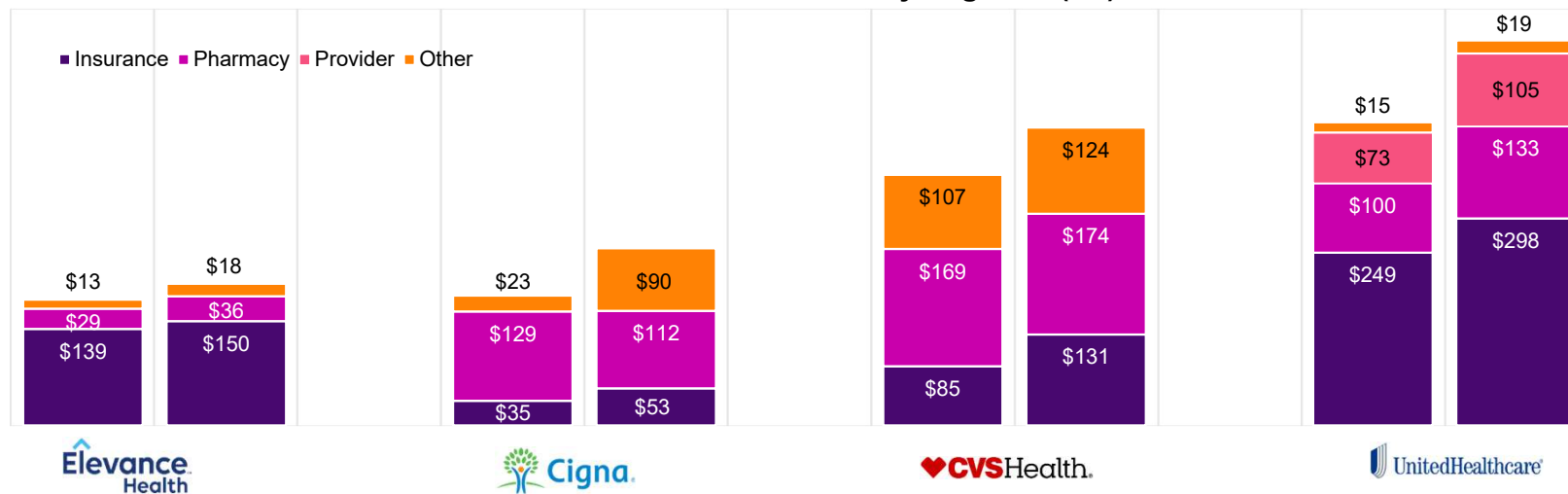
National carriers are less focused on core medical administration services for growth

- More than three-quarters of U.S. commercial members are enrolled in BUCA (Blues, United, Cigna and Aetna) plans.
- These 'health plans' are growing revenue from alternative service offerings — pharmacy benefit management provider groups, retail locations and noninsurance assets – while insurance margins face pressure from utilization, government programs and GLP-1 trends

Pressure Points

- Government programs: Medicaid redeterminations and Medicare Advantage rate dynamics
- PBM pricing and regulatory challenges
- Membership shifts from Medicaid redeterminations and ACA exchanges exits
- Regulatory and legal challenges
- Public perceptions and transparency

2022 vs. 2024 Revenue by Segment (\$B)



NPS of medical plan carrier

(Promoters – Detractors)

All industries

+10

Healthcare

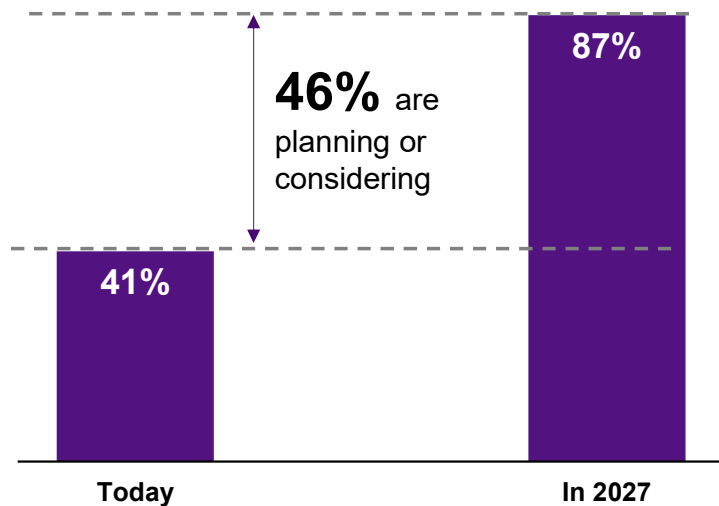
-2

Source: FY 2022 and 2024 10-K annual reports from the respective companies. Source: WTW 2025 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey. NPS score based on "How likely are you to recommend your medical plan carrier or administrator to a friend or colleague at another company?"

Growing momentum for alternative plan designs



Employers adopting alternative plan designs



Source: WTW 2025 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey.

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Features of alternative plan designs

Alternative providers

26% use network designs to limit or restrict access to select providers, with another 20% planning or considering

Transparency

23% offer a health plan that confirms coverage and provides details on out-of-pocket costs prior to scheduling an appointment, another 32% planning or considering

Navigation

35% offer enhanced care navigation to relay provider quality information, another 26% planning or considering

Use of technology

26% use technology to provide information on local provider quality, another 23% planning or considering

Advanced primary care

5% offer an advanced primary care plan, another 17% planning or considering

Alternative health plan designs are gaining traction in the market

Integration of design and delivery to transform care

93% of healthcare employers are considering **alternative plans for 2027**, up from 59% today

- Alternative providers
- Transparency
- Navigation through technology
- Advanced primary care

Narrow Network Models



- Primary care-centric design
- No deductible
- “Direct contract in a box” where providers bear risk for Centivo members
- Network is dramatically narrowed around high-quality, low-cost providers

Steerage Models



- Functions like a tiered network, with lower cost sharing for using preferred providers
- Steers members to efficient providers, while maintaining optics of a broad network
- Function as an overlay to current designs

Health Plan Models



- Variable copay-based design
- No deductible
- Lower copay for services provided by more efficient providers
- Uses UHC’s broad network

Other players in each category



Source: WTW 2025 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey, Healthcare.

Strategy Discussion



- ☐ What are you considering for your plan design and cost-sharing for 2027 and longer-term?
- ☐ What are you looking for from your medical carrier partner?

Pharmacy

PBM market forces



Escalating drug prices



**Increased transparency
demands**



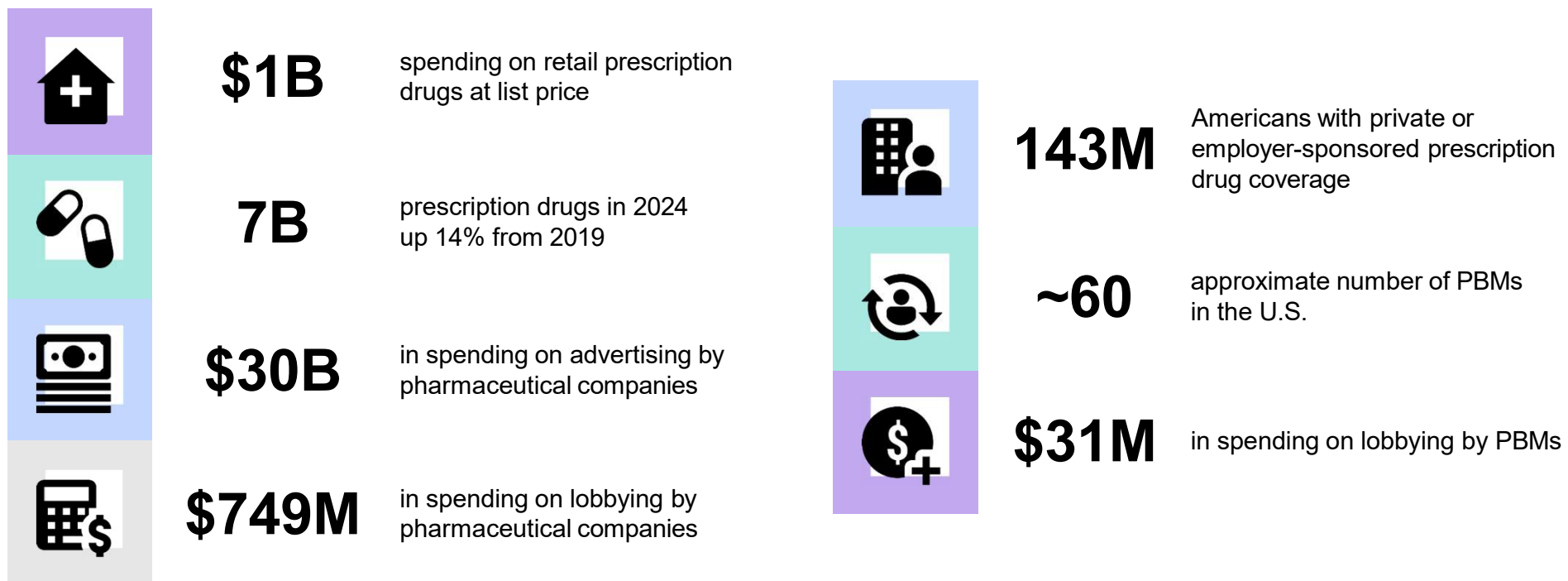
**Legislative and
regulatory momentum**



**Employers driving
transformation**



The magnitude of the situation



IQUVIA – Understanding the use of medicines in the U.S. 2025

[wtwco.com](https://www.wtwco.com)

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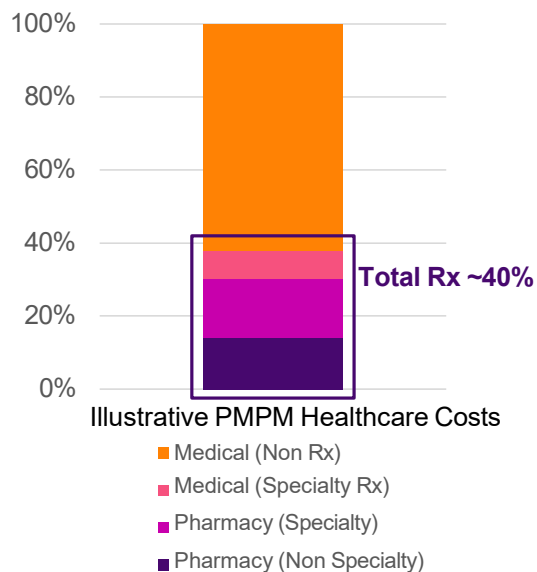
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We are headed towards a pharmaceutical-based healthcare system

Drug treatments will eclipse focus on procedures to treat conditions and reshape benefit strategies

Pharmaceuticals account for 40% of total healthcare spend for some employers today



Reshaping Benefits

GLP-1s (weight loss....and beyond)

The expanding use and cost of GLP-1 drugs is increasing overall pharmacy costs and **reshaping how employers think about formulary design and coverage decisions**

Cell and Gene Therapies

Cost and value questions arise with new high cost, often curative, single treatment therapies (gene therapy, cell therapy, CAR-T, etc.) that will **create new financing and contracting models**

Specialty Medications (Medical Plan)

Often overlooked and increasing in cost, specialty medications dispensed through the medical plan are creating a **new area of focus and accountability for medical carriers (or others)**

Emerging Strategies

- Wrap-around clinical support
- Narrow prescribing networks
- Direct contracting
- Health care reimbursement account

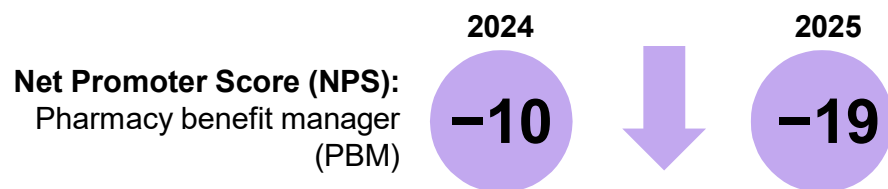
- Predictive analytics and forecasting
- Carve-out and risk pooling
- Value-based contracting
- Specialty networks

- Predictive analytics and forecasting
- Site of care redirection
- Carve-out infusion networks
- Revise TPA contract terms



PBM dissatisfaction warrants change and aligned incentives

Employers are frustrated with their PBM's performance



How does your PBM support your company in the following ways?	2024	2025	Changes
Obtains advantageous pricing	54%	42%	▼ -12
Leads to high-quality, low-cost care	56%	46%	▼ -10
Has an advantageous rebate program	66%	59%	▼ -7

(percentages reflect "agree" or "strongly agree")

Companies are increasing governance and reevaluating their PBMs



Out to bid

75% of employers have or will take their PBM out to bid



Contracting

49% use transparent and pass-through contract structures, with another 22% planning or considering

25% use acquisition cost structures, with another 26% planning or considering



Auditing

58% have recently audited their pharmacy benefits. Best practice is to conduct an audit every one to three years.

Source: WTW 2024 and 2025 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey.

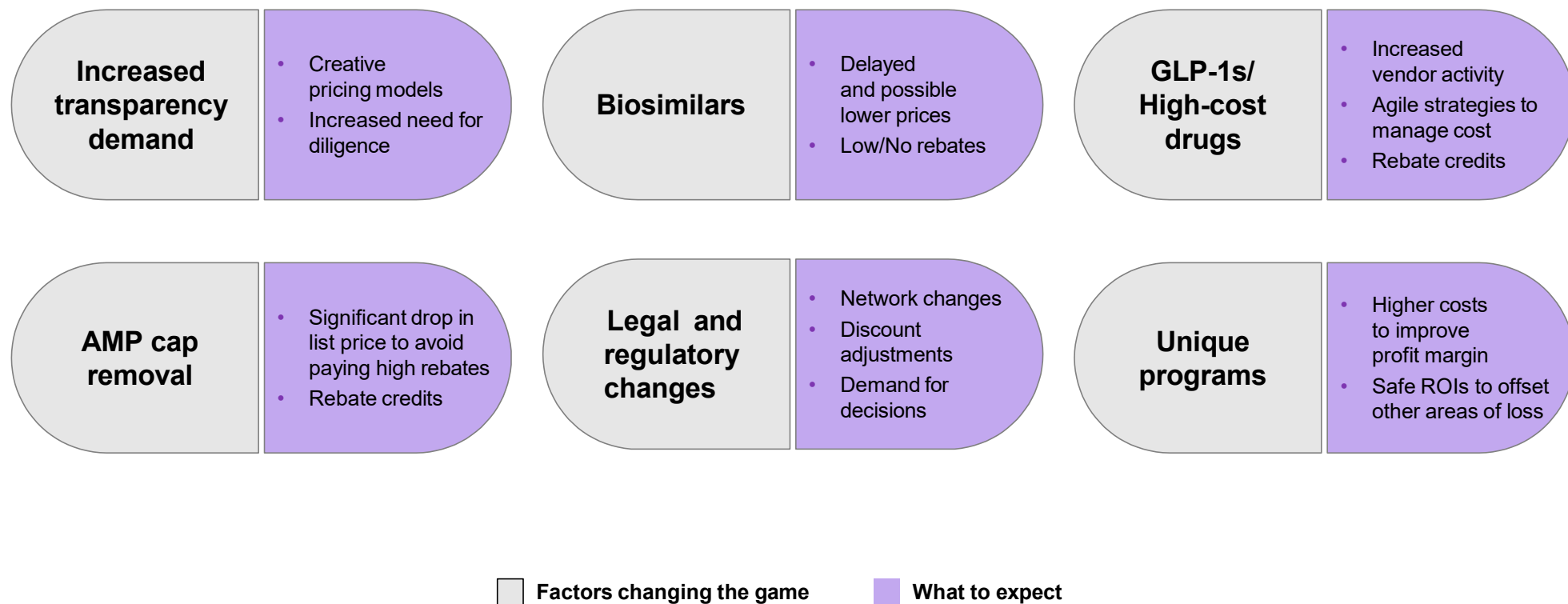
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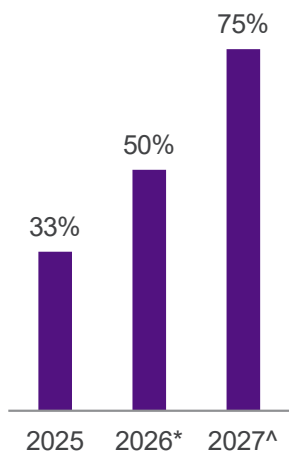
PBM tactics: Changing rules



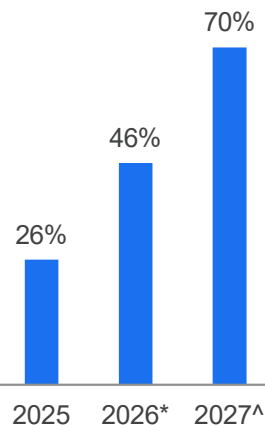
Highlights: Emerging PBM strategies



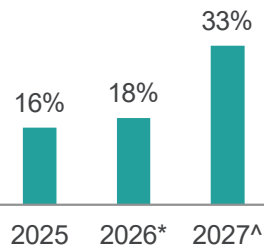
Take PBM out to bid



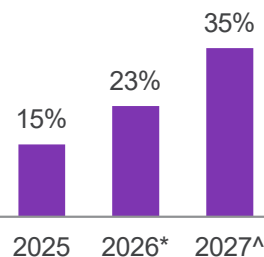
Require participation in vendor lifestyle modification program



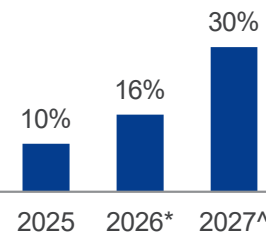
Carve out select specialty pharmacy services/solutions



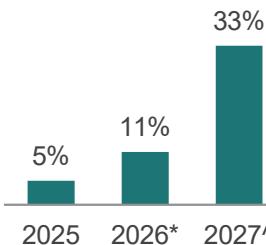
Perform an acquisition cost analysis



Use an overlay solution

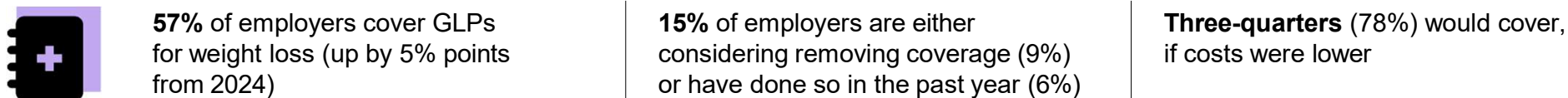


Partner with a new PBM

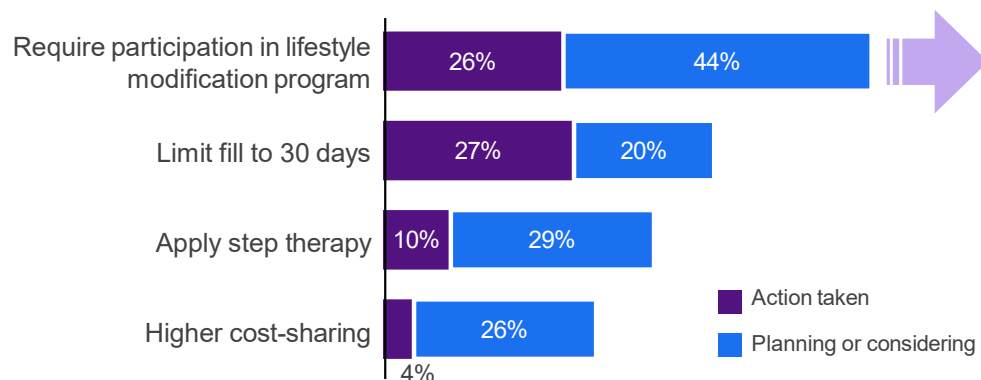


Note: *Planning for 2026, ^Considering for 2027.
Source: WTW 2025 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey.

Employers are considering the removal of coverage and other strategies to address unsustainable GLP costs



Most common management around GLP-1 coverage for obesity



76% of employers use PBM standard prior authorization criteria, while **9%** use a different body mass index (BMI) criteria than the PBM standard

Sources: WTW 2024 and 2025 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey.



Expanded use of lifestyle modification program requirements

Common vendor partnerships:

- PBM program (33%)
- Vida (5%)
- Omada (28%)
- Virta (5%)



Direct-to-consumer offerings are preferred to compounded solutions when GLP-1 coverage is not offered or removed

Strategy Discussion



- ☐ What is your top pharmacy focus?
- ☐ Share your point of view on emerging solutions and direct-to-consumer

Vendor Governance and Clinical Strategy

Companies can gain better value from their benefit spend and protect themselves from lawsuits through increased focus on vendor performance

US employers are managing 10-12 vendors across their benefit ecosystem

A fiduciary has a duty of loyalty and prudence to **guard** the interests of plan participants and beneficiaries, and to ensure that plan assets are used for their benefit.

To **guard** the plan, the fiduciary must act with care to create a thoughtful governance strategy.



Audits

43% are increasing efficiency through medical claims audit with another **34%** planning or considering



Fraud and waste

10% have increased evaluation of fraud, waste and abuse with another **25%** planning or considering



Vendor performance

Continuous focus on evaluating vendor effectiveness: **53%** are taking extensive actions today



Plan oversight

31% have conducted reviews of prior authorizations or evaluated qualifying payments for out-of-network services with another **26%** planning

Source: WTW 2025 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey, Healthcare.

Clinical strategy considerations

Clinical advances will continue to drive clinical strategy

Cancer



- Number one clinical condition spend across employers
- Employer strategies include:
 - Carve-out expert medical opinions (EMOs) and expansion of COEs
 - Cancer-specific advocacy
 - Prevention strategy
 - Pharmacy strategy
 - Cell and Gene Therapy Strategy

Women's Health & Family solutions



- Addressing maternity within holistic family solutions lens, including family building, support and reproductive care
- Women's health expansion (e.g., menopause support, pelvic floor)

Musculoskeletal



- Second highest spend across the industry
- Employer strategies include:
 - COE
 - Digital physical therapy
 - Connection to mental health
 - Connection to safety and occ health

High Cost Claimants



- Top focus area for cost management
- Significant trend pressure in the upwards of 30%+
- Employers strategies:
 - Adoption of higher dedicated models at carriers
 - Prior authorization reviews
 - Enhanced navigation and steerage

Cardiometabolic



- Expansion of strategies including diabetes, obesity and cardiac
- GLP-1s now the largest pain point in all clinical considerations
- Employers evaluating coverage and point solutions

Mental health



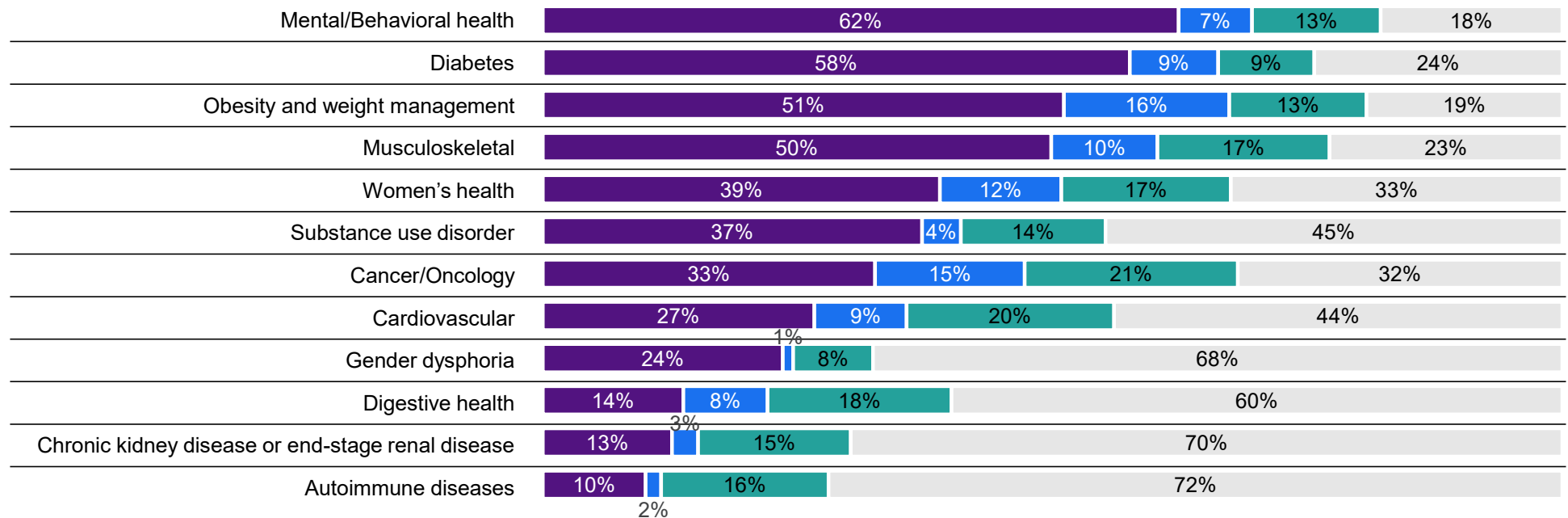
- Top clinical condition of focus
- Employer strategies include:
 - EAP evolution and digital first models
 - Substance use disorder COEs, including new digital models

Source: WTW 2024 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey

Employers are committed to evolving their clinical strategy



Which of the following clinical areas has your organization acted on or planned to act on as a means of improving member health? Actions can include revising medical or pharmacy benefits, evaluating your network strategy, offering enhanced navigation or adopting other medical management vendor solutions.



Note: Percentages may not sum up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: WTW 2025 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey.

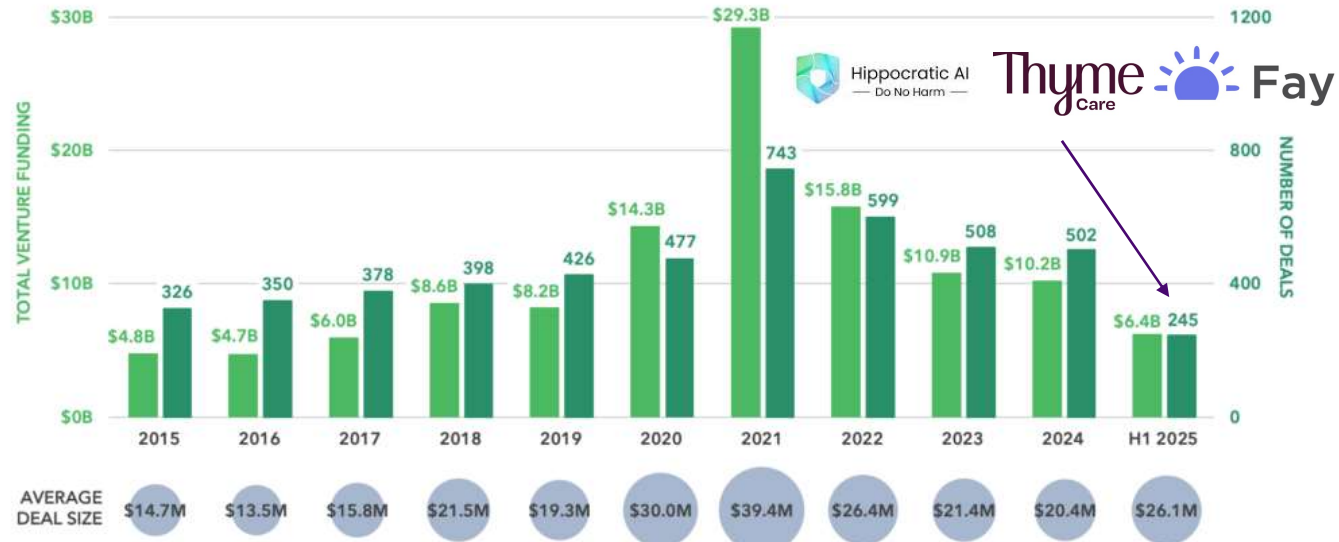
■ Action taken/Tactic used in 2025
 ■ Planning for 2026
 ■ Considering for 2027
 ■ Neither in use nor planning

Venture capital is accelerating AI use cases and the IPO market is thawing

- Annualizing the first half of 2025, we are seeing a **modest increase in digital health venture funding** compared to the past 2 years; this signals a **steady venture market** after post Covid boom
- We are seeing **fewer deals, but the deal size is growing** – investing in later stage companies and paying AI premium
- **AI-enables startups** captured 62% of funding
- **Thawing of IPO market and adjusted valuations** – Hinge Health and Omada Health (just 2 digital health IPOs in past 3 years); Hinge Health IPOd at \$3B vs. \$6B valuation in 2021

U.S. DIGITAL HEALTH FUNDING, DEAL COUNT, AND DEAL SIZE
2015-H1 2025

ROCK
HEAL+H



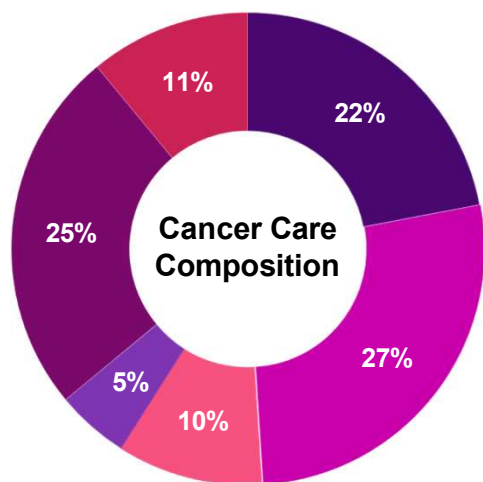
Notes and sources: Rock Health Digital Health Venture Funding Database; includes U.S. deals >\$2M; data through June 30, 2025

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Source: Rock Health, October 2025

Oncology: Understanding and establishing strategic levers

- Pharmacy
- Outpatient
- Inpatient
- Medical Radiationtherapy
- Medical Chemotherapy
- Imaging



Coordinated effort
that addresses
three areas



Early identification and
risk screening



Diagnosis confirmation and
treatment plan alternatives



Access to high quality care and
mitigate financial burden to the plan
and member

Merative WTW BoB Active Population, representing 358,824 average member lives

1 [The Costs of Cancer 2020](#)

2 [Cost Differences Associated with Oncology Care](#)

3 [Ways to Curb the Sky-high Costs of CAR-T Cell Therapy](#)

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Oncology marketplace service comparison

Market leaders have emerged in the focus areas of each stage with overlap in other areas; these are all stand-alone products.	Screening	Diagnosis	Intervention and treatment support		Comments
	Focus: early detection	Focus: EMO	Focus: treatment at COE	Focus: Navigation and treatment support	
  					- Grail: multi-cancer early detection (MCED) for 50+ types of cancer (45+ without recommended screening test) - Color: Early detection for cancers with screening guidelines and genetic testing to identify hereditary risk; also provide treatment management and survivorship
   					- Traditional EMO: member-initiated, confirm diagnosis and treatment 2nd.MD: acquired by Accolade
 					- AccessHope: traditional EMO and nontraditional claims — triggered EMO (contingent upon carrier utilization management [UM] data; cancer support nurseline) - Included Health: EMO (previously Grand Rounds) and treatment management support (launched 2025)
  					- Transcarent: utilizes Accolade for EMO - Carrum: utilizes AccessHope for EMO
   					- Mayo Clinic and Cleveland Clinic: nontraditional EMO with invitation for in-person treatment - Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) Direct: CCMU cancer EMO partner; in-person treatment
  					- Navisa: attends appointments with member - Osara Health: Behavior change program to support positive treatment outcomes

Cell and Gene Therapy Risk Management Opportunities

Risk Management Solutions

Alternative Payment Arrangement

Amortized Loan Products
 Instalment Payment Plans
 Subscription Based Payment

octaviantFINANCIAL

CVS specialty

Quantile
Health

Alternative Contracting

Value Based Contracting
 340b/Direct Contracting

B!OMARIN

bluebirdbio

carrumhealth

Reinsurance

Insure risk with third party
 Insure risk through a captive
 Public/private risk pooling fund

aetna

synergie medication
collective

BCS

End to End Solutions

Combines clinical and financial management, predictive analytics, clinical navigation, provider contracting, claims repricing, risk pooling

Aradigm

ETS

Strategy Discussion



- ☐ Where are you focusing on your clinical strategy?
- ☐ How do you define value with point solutions?



Thank you!