

HEALTH MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS



Assessing absenteeism at this time has been even more critical than in the past. Understanding the workforce (and what or isn't driving their productivity) is key to the success of any organisation. With the return to work, many companies have found that the number of absent workers has increased significantly. This is largely driven by employees with co-morbidities who could not return to work; employees fearful of contracting the disease (e.g. fear of public transport or the work environment); or employees who've come in contact with infected individuals and are required to self-isolate / quarantine.

Policies now need to factor in vulnerable employees and how employers assist, for example providing reasonable accommodation recommendations for these employees and incorporating specific guidelines. HMS has conducted a number of absenteeism assessments to guide and assist employers. We also provide recommendations around the management of vulnerable employees.

In examining the underlying pressures that employees experience in the normal working environment, coupled with the additional pressures in the new world of work, the inter-related issues of personal, health and financial well-being come into the spotlight. The pressures impact on both the physical and psychological side of employees. This not only can lead to lower productivity and higher absenteeism, but could increase the number of disability claims and even suicides.

In response to these issues and others as a result of the pandemic, it has been noted that Covid-19 has demanded three phases for organisations:

1 RESPOND

2 RECOVER

3 RESET

To achieve these responses through a productive workforce, employers need to offer support through a holistic health and wellness strategy by:

- Incorporating wellness programmes (Employee Assistance Programmes)
- Absenteeism monitoring and management
- Incapacity management in the workplace, including ergonomics. While the focus has always been on an on-site workplace, employers need to consider the ergonomics at home and how best to set up the 'home' office.
- Integrated health risk management
- Build the well-being of employees on four pillars:
 1. Physical well-being
 2. Emotional well-being
 3. Financial well-being
 4. Social well-being

These are a few of the fresh obligations for employers as the 'new normal' continues with a surge of new cases and reinfections. In addition, employers need to consider the long-term effects of employees who've recovered, but have developed co-morbidities or are still struggling with symptoms as a result of the illness ('Long Covid').

More information on this and the potential impact on employees can be requested from Alexander Forbes Health.