

Project Title: Improving Employee Wellness and Engagement with Fertility Services

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Topic Category (choose 1): Administration

Background/Significance of Project: Employee engagement and the retention of talented employees is essential for the sustained success of academic institutions. Employees with infertility benefits report greater happiness, productivity and loyalty to their employer. The University of Washington (UW) has approximately 11,000 faculty and staff aged 20-44 of which 10-15% may have infertility. The State of Washington does not have a mandate for fertility coverage. Thus, couples confronted with infertility are at risk for considerable financial and psychological distress and involuntary childlessness. The University of Washington recognizes the importance of work-life balance and the negative impact of infertility and involuntary childlessness on the fiscal health and quality of life of those affected. We hypothesize creation of a UW fertility benefit will reduce disparities in access to effective and evidence based fertility care and will increase UW employee happiness, loyalty and help recruit and retain the highest quality faculty and work force.

Purpose/Objective:

The short-term goals of this project are to;

- Increase UW employee access to reproductive services for a reduced fee
- Add value to UW faculty appointments and make UW the preferred employer in Washington State
- Develop a policy that reduces disparities in access to fertility services

The long-term goals of this project are to;

- Offer fertility coverage with UW health insurance plans
- Change the Washington State policy regarding elective and medically indicated fertility coverage

Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy:

- Educate senior leadership about the significance of fertility services in employee wellness, recruitment and retention.
- Identify key institutional stakeholders across the UW system and build collaborative relationships and consensus about the fertility benefits offered to UW employees.
- Perform a financial analysis, develop a business plan, and define the financial impact of an employee cash discount of 5% above cost.
- Develop a strategic marketing and implementation plan.

Outcomes/Results: Reduce disparities in access to fertility services and improve employee emotional and financial wellness and quality of life.

Conclusion/Statement of Potential Impact: This project is well aligned with the institutional pillar to make UW the preferred employer in Seattle and Washington State. A fertility benefit will add value to the fiscal health and quality of life of UW employees affected with infertility and will serve as a vehicle to recruit and retain the most qualified employees. Additionally, this program will add value to UW by advancing the educational mission, increasing opportunities for reproductive research and by increasing downstream revenue for the overall clinical mission.