

Cancer Support in the Workplace: Addressing the Gap for Employees

International SOS urges businesses to implement cancer support program as 96% lack policies with half of the working-age population projected to develop cancer.

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, February 7, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With half of the working-age population projected to develop cancer, the workplace is becoming an increasingly important source of support and assistance for employees navigating the disease. Ahead of World Cancer Day on 4 February, International SOS, the world's leading health and security risk services company, calls on organisations to proactively address the growing impact of cancer on their workforce by implementing a comprehensive cancer support programme within their employee wellbeing strategy.



INTERNATIONAL SOS' 5C's OF CANCER WORKPLACE SUPPORT: TIPS FOR ORGANISATIONS

- Champion awareness and prevention**
Proactively educate employees and disseminate information about cancer prevention, early detection, and available resources.
- Care and support**
Provide comprehensive support including access to screening, medical support, counselling and offering flexible work arrangements to accommodate treatment needs.
- Communication and collaboration**
Foster a safe & supportive environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their health concerns, diagnosis and treatment plan without fear of judgment.
- Conduct a workplace assessment**
Analyse potential hazards that might increase cancer risk, such as exposure to carcinogens. Implement control measures to minimise risks and promote a healthy working environment.
- Confidentiality and respect**
Implement clear policies and procedures for handling employee health information and ensure that managers are trained on how to provide sensitive support.

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Workplace-related cancers are a growing concern globally, with the incidence in Central Europe and parts of Asia approaching levels seen in Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

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Dr Kate O'Reilly

Despite this, many organisations remain unprepared. For example, in the UK, 96% of organisations lack cancer-specific policies, and 77% of employees with or affected by cancer find their benefits insufficient for their needs.

International SOS Global Assistance data (2022-2024) shows breast cancer (28%) and prostate cancer (6.27%) as the most common cancer-related assistance requests among women and men, respectively, highlighting the need for targeted support.

Dr Kate O'Reilly, Medical Director at International SOS, comments, "This gap in support underscores the urgent need for comprehensive cancer strategies within workplace wellbeing programmes. Educating employees about cancer risks, promoting healthy lifestyle choices and facilitating early detection are crucial measures to mitigate the risks of cancer and ensure employees receive the support they need throughout their health journey.

By understanding the specific needs of their workforce, organisations can more effectively tailor their cancer support programmes. This includes providing access to regular screenings and educational resources. It is essential for organisations to foster an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their health concerns and seeking the help they need. Ultimately, a proactive and inclusive approach to cancer care in the workplace not only benefits the individual but also enhances overall organisational resilience and productivity."

International SOS offers the following 5C's of Cancer Workplace Support to help organisations strengthen their workforce wellbeing support programme:

1. Champion awareness and prevention

- Proactively educate employees and disseminate information about cancer prevention, early detection, and available resources through various channels such as workshops, seminars, presentations, internal emails, posters and newsletters.

2. Care and support

- Provide comprehensive support to employees throughout their cancer journey. This includes access to screening, medical support, counselling services and offering flexible work arrangements to accommodate treatment needs.

3. Communication and collaboration

- Foster a safe and supportive environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their health concerns, diagnosis and treatment plan without fear of judgment or discrimination.

4. Conduct a workplace assessment

- Analyse potential workplace hazards that might increase cancer risk, such as exposure to carcinogens. Implement control measures to minimise risks and promote a healthy working environment. Modern office work may also contribute to three cancer risk factors, including excess body weight, diet and physical inactivity.

5. Confidentiality and respect

- Implement clear policies and procedures for handling employee health information and ensure that all employees, especially managers and supervisors, are trained on how to maintain confidentiality and provide sensitive support.

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Notes to Editors

About the International SOS Group of Companies; 40 years of saving lives

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Founded in 1985, the International SOS Group has been saving lives for 40 years. Headquartered in London & Singapore, it is trusted by over 9,000 organisations. This includes the majority of the Fortune Global 500, as well as mid-size enterprises, governments, educational institutions, and NGOs. Nearly 12,000 multi-cultural security, medical, logistics and digital experts stand with you to provide support & assistance from over 1,200 locations in 90 countries, 24/7, 365 days. Between them, International SOS employees speak nearly 100 languages and dialects in our Assistance Centres, Clinics, and offices.

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