

Building on Benefits

The Building on Benefits (BoB) research project aims to understand access to and use of employer benefits among frontline healthcare workers and how access to benefits relates to workers' financial well-being. A total of 2,321 frontline healthcare workers have completed an online survey in the fall of 2021, and 25 workers have completed in-depth interviews with the Social Policy Institute at Washington University in St. Louis as of April 14, 2022. A public and final report will be available September 2022.

Background

There are 18 million healthcare workers in the U.S. with 2.4 million working as home health aids. However, burnout and mental health problems among healthcare workers are widespread as nearly a fifth of healthcare workers have quit during the COVID-19 pandemic, contributing to staffing shortages. A “perfect storm” of burnout and labor shortages amidst a growing population of older adults will place major strain on the healthcare system, yet better benefits and improved working conditions may boost recruitment and retention.

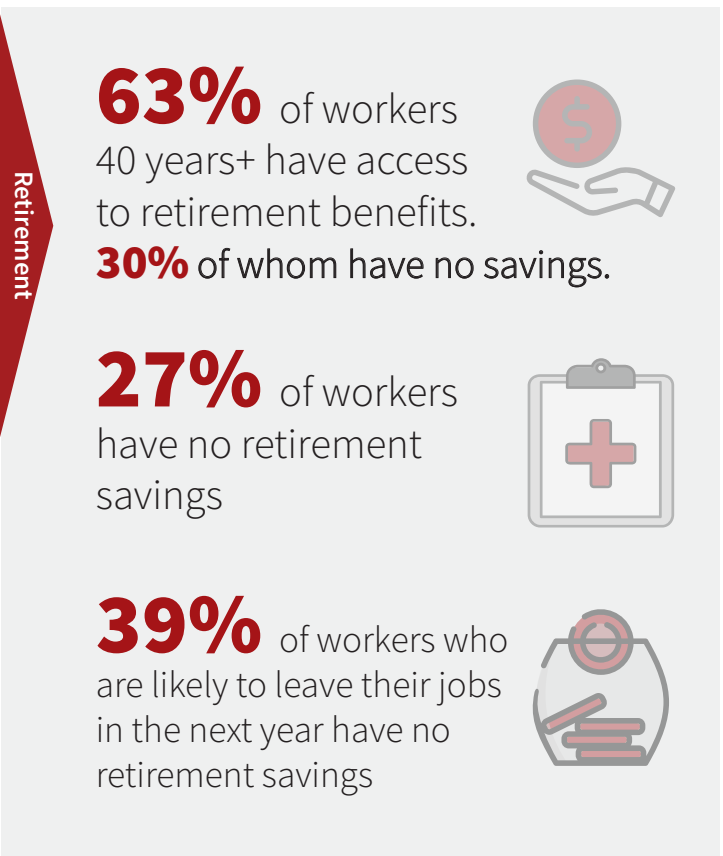
Overall Findings

We found that access to benefits was lower among workers without a college degree and those working in home health or private duty compared to facility-based* settings such as hospitals. Most (59%) of workers changed jobs at least once in the past year; one-third said they were somewhat or very likely to leave their current job within the next year.

Access to and Usage of Benefits

- 85% of respondents **used at least 1 of 10 benefits**
- **Only 53% had access to a retirement plan, though 87% of workers said retirement benefits were somewhat or very important**
- On average, there was a 41-percentage point gap between benefits workers said were somewhat or very important and benefits that were actually offered
- Workers who are likely to leave their job in the next year had 2 out of 5 major benefits compared to 3 out of 5 benefits for those unlikely to leave

**Facility-based healthcare workers includes those in hospitals but also individuals working in a variety of other clinical settings*



The Benefits Gap

When comparing importance of benefits to actual access, researchers found a 41 percentage point gap between those healthcare workers found somewhat to very important and actual benefits received.

Difference in Importance of Benefits and Access							
Type of Benefits	Access	Importance	Gap	Type of Benefits	Access	Importance	Gap
Health insurance	70%	89%	19%	Expenses reimbursement	29%	74%	45%
Paid time off	60%	85%	25%	Tuition assistance	21%	69%	48%
Retirement benefits	53%	87%	34%	Financial counseling	20%	69%	48%
Child care assistance	40%	71%	30%	Pay advances or loans	16%	70%	53%
Dental benefits	30%	83%	53%	Student loan assistance	13%	65%	52%
						Total avg.	40%

Financial Health and Wellness

Workers without access to paid leave were 24% more likely to have come into work sick at least once in the past year.

Among those likely to leave their job in the next year:

- 41% have no emergency savings (compared to 17% of those not likely to leave their job)
- 39% have no retirement savings (compared to 21% of those not likely to leave their job)

Among the 48% of workers who worry about running out of food:

- 64% are home health/private duty
- 44% are facility-based

Workers who have fewer benefits have greater financial insecurity in many respects:

- food insecurity
- lack of emergency savings
- trouble paying for housing

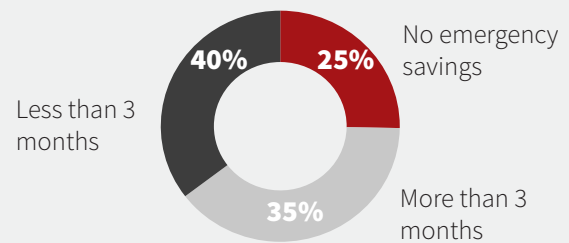


48% of workers worry about running out of food

64% of workers came to work sick at least once in the past year



Access to emergency savings



Wellness

Finance

