COUNCIL FOR
DISABILITY AWARENESS

Worker Disability:

A Growing Risk to Retirement Security

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Foreword

Over the last generation, we have witnessed a massive transfer of economic risk from broad structures of insurance, whether sponsored by the corporate sector or by government, onto the fragile balance sheets of American families. This transformation has reshaped Americans' relationships to their government, their employers and each other. And it has transformed the economic circumstances of American families, from the bottom of the economic ladder to nearly its highest rungs.

We have heard a great deal about rising inequality and the growing gap between the rungs of our economic ladder. And yet, to most Americans, inequality is far less tangible and immediate than a trend we have heard much less about: rising insecurity, or the growing risk of slipping from the ladder itself. Even as the American economy has expanded over the last quarter century, economic insecurity has quietly crept into everyday American life.

Private employer-based health plans and pensions have eroded, or been transformed to shift more risk onto workers' shoulders. Government programs of economic security have been cut, restructured or simply allowed to grow more threadbare. Bankruptcies and home mortgage foreclosures have become dramatically more common. Our jobs and our families are less and less financially secure.

Insecurity strikes at the very heart of the American Dream. It is a fixed American belief that people who work hard, make good choices and do right by their families can buy themselves long–term security. The rising tide of risk swamps these expectations, leaving individuals who have worked hard to reach their present heights facing uncertainty about whether they can keep from falling. With the economy now in its most precarious state in years, insecurity is certain to be one of the most pressing domestic challenges faced in the coming years.

In this context, the Council for Disability Awareness has issued an important reminder that one of the most serious risks that workers face is disability. As documented in this report, traditional sources of support for disabled workers have eroded even as the risk of disability has risen. The Council shows that a response will have to come from all of us, because disability is a risk that faces all of us.

– By Jacob S. Hacker, author of The Great Risk Shift: The New Economic Insecurity and the Decline of the American Dream and Professor of Political Science at Yale University and Fellow at the New America Foundation

Overview: what's at stake

It's a scenario that few Americans think of or even want to entertain, but one that could easily become a reality for any one of us: an illness or accident leaves us unable to work and earn a living, challenging our ability to pay our everyday expenses, afford the rising cost of medical care and save for the future.

As personal lifestyles become less healthy, the population ages and medical advances continue to extend life, the risk of suffering a disability is on the rise, threatening the short- and long-term financial security of more and more people. This danger couldn't come at a worse time. The societal trend is to transfer onto each of our shoulders more responsibility than ever before to plan for and secure our own financial futures, while our access to resources that traditionally were available to help past generations, such as pensions or employer-provided retiree health benefits, is diminishing.

We're on our own, so to speak, and this raises important questions:

- Do Americans fully understand and appreciate that the responsibility to secure their own financial security is being shifted to them?
- Are American workers responding adequately to this increased responsibility and the accompanying risks, including the rising likelihood of disability?
- Are they exhibiting the foresight to be proactive in managing their future financial needs?
- Do they have the appropriate knowledge and information to make the right choices and effectively manage the risks associated with this increased responsibility?

While the answers to these questions may suggest the outlook is bleak, the time is right to create opportunities to raise awareness about the risks disability poses for long-term financial security and to effectively help Americans make responsible decisions about their financial security. It will take a collaborative effort: one that includes employers, the media, and financial planners and advisors. Implementation of educational strategies aimed at helping Americans become aware of the value of proactive planning and adopting healthier lifestyles is critical to helping them stay in control of their financial futures, even if disability strikes.

The shift toward more personal financial responsibility

For most of the post-World War II era, retirement has been portrayed as a time when long-deferred aspirations can be realized. Years of work are rewarded by the opportunity to relax, enjoy time with children and grandchildren, travel and maybe even move to a warmer climate. While these aspirations have never been fully attainable by everyone, the image of the retirement lifestyle has become as important a part of the nation's psyche as the American Dream itself.

Creating the means to realize the American retirement dream, however, has seldom been an individual pursuit. Government and corporate programs have been the critical, and in many cases the primary, contributors to helping retired workers achieve financially secure lifestyles during their post-working years. Social Security and, more recently, Medicare have provided an important safety net for ensuring some level of income and health care protection. Many employers also have provided significant support through defined benefit pension plans, and in many situations, retiree medical benefits. Times are changing, however, and the socio-political philosophy that encouraged these benefits is changing. As Yale Professor Jacob S. Hacker has written:

> *Over the past two decades…the corporate and government policies that once provided a basic foundation of economic security for American workers and their families have run headlong into a collection of beliefs, institutions, and advocates that I call the "Personal Responsibility Crusade." The core assertion embodied in the Personal Responsibility Crusade is that Americans are best off dealing with economic risks on their own, without the overweening interference or expense of wider systems of risk sharing… [It] is all about putting more "skin in the game" – making people more responsible for the management and finance of the major economic risks they face.*[1]

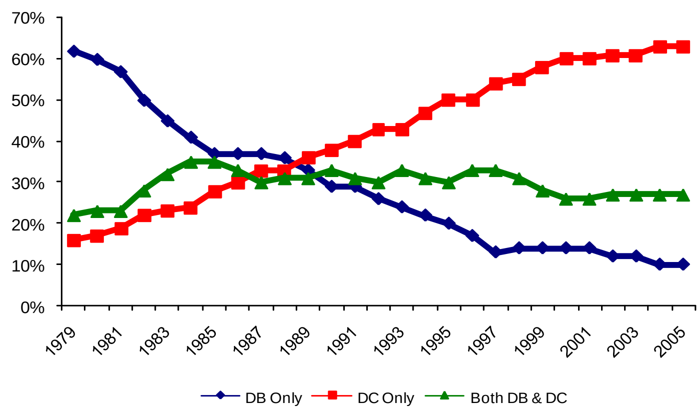
In fact, this growing shift toward personal responsibility, and its associated risks, now affects the lives of most Americans. This movement essentially began with the growth of defined contribution pension plans – most notably 401(k) plans – that were originally developed to provide a tax-qualified way of augmenting workers' retirement savings.

However, as the liability associated with maintaining traditional pension plans increased, employers looked to defined contribution plans to help control their employee retirement costs. Increasingly, defined contribution plans have become the only retirement savings vehicle many employers now provide. In 1979, six in 10 active workers participated in a traditional (defined benefit) pension plan. By 2005, the proportion had dropped to one in 10. During the same period, participation in defined contribution plans rose four-fold to

[1] Jacob S. Hacker, *The Great Risk Shift: The New Economic Insecurity and the Decline of the American Dream*, rev. and exp. ed. (Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 37-38.

more than 60 percent. The responsibility to fund and manage retirement savings is rapidly shifting from employers to employees, as the graph below illustrates.

Percentage of Full-Time Employees Participating in Defined Benefit and Defined Contribution Plans

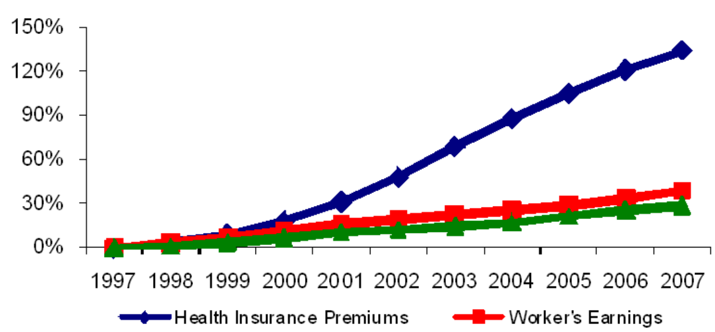


Source: Employee Benefits Research Institute, EBRI Databook on Employee Benefits, Chapter 4, 2007.

In much the same way, rising medical insurance costs are forcing many employers to re-evaluate the plans they offer. Current estimates place the average annual cost of coverage for a family at more than $12,000. Since 1979, health insurance premiums have more than doubled, rising five times faster than the overall inflation rate and four times faster than workers' earnings.[2] And the costs continue to rise, as the following graph shows.

Health Insurance Premiums, Workers' Earnings and Inflation (Percent Change Since 1997)

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, "Employer Health Benefits: 2007 Summary of Findings," 2007.



[2] Kaiser Family Foundation, "Employer Health Benefits: 2007 Summary of Findings," 2007.

Employers, looking for ways to reduce their growing liability for these escalating health care costs, are shifting more of these costs to employees. The result: higher premium contributions and increasing deductibles and co-pays for employees.

Consumer-directed health plans (CDHPs) are an example of this employer-to-employee cost-shifting trend. The most popular CDHP model couples a high deductible insurance plan with a tax-preferred employee health savings account (HSA) that is intended to cover the employee's higher out-of-pocket medical costs. The concept is to pre-fund these HSA accounts and have employees manage them over the long term. Unfortunately, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, where these new CDHPs are available, only one in two employees has opened and contributed to their pre-funded account.

Employers also are focusing their cost-shifting actions on retirees. Between 1988 and 2006, the share of large employers offering retiree health benefits declined from 66 percent to 35 percent.[3] Consequently, budgeting for health care expenses in retirement has become a necessity for more and more Americans. Recent estimates suggest that a 65-year-old couple retiring in 2007 will need about $215,000 to cover medical costs in retirement, a 34 percent increase over 2002. If this trend continues, costs will continue to increase by about 6 percent a year. A 65-year-old earning $60,000 and planning to retire this year can expect to spend about half his or her pre-tax Social Security benefit on personal health care expenses for the next 16 to 18 years.[4] And this estimate does not take into account over-the-counter medications, most dental services and long-term care expenses.

As the responsibility for pre-funding retirement income and paying for an increasing share of future escalating medical costs during retirement rapidly shifts from the boardroom to the individual, the risks to retirees' long-term financial security are more pronounced. Employee income has become the primary source for funding one's future post-working financial obligations. Consequently, events that can interrupt an employee's income today not only threaten his or her current financial well-being, but can also jeopardize his or her expected post-working lifestyle. One such often overlooked and underappreciated risk that is growing at an alarming rate among the American workforce is losing the ability to earn a living because of an illness or accident.[5] The impact of disability can be far-reaching and severe.

[3] Kaiser Family Foundation and Hewitt, *Retiree Health Benefits Examined: Findings from the Kaiser/Hewitt 2006 Retiree Health Benefit Survey*, 2006.
[4] Fidelity Investments news release, "Fidelity Investments Estimates $215,000 needed to Cover Retiree Health Care Costs," http://content.members.fidelity.com/Inside_Fidelity/fullStory/1,,7448,00.html.
[5] The Council for Disability Awareness, *The 2006 CDA Long-term Disability Claims Review*, April 2007.

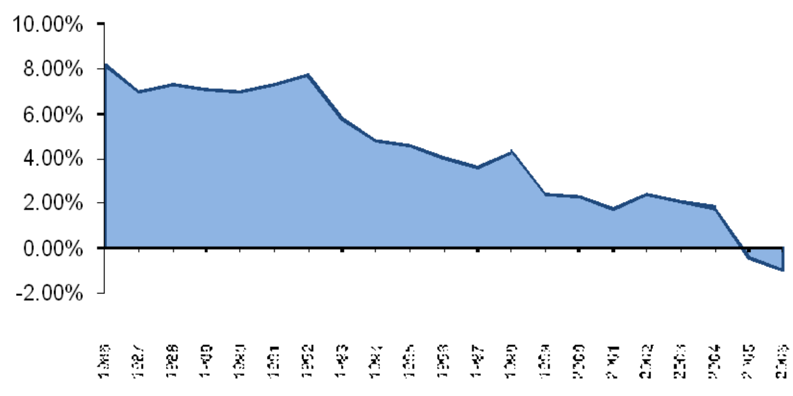
Managing risk

Clearly, as this new era of personal responsibility brings added risks to working people's abilities to create financial security for themselves, workers must proactively manage to a much greater extent the risks that can challenge their financial security in retirement. But do they fully understand and appreciate the risks that are being shifted to them? Are American workers responding adequately to this increased responsibility? Are they exhibiting the foresight to be proactive in managing their future financial needs? Do they have the appropriate knowledge and information to make the right choices and effectively manage the risks associated with this increased responsibility? The answers to these questions, unfortunately, are not promising for most Americans, as the next section outlines.

Americans are not savers

There is much talk about the declining savings rate in America. In fact, only about half of workers have managed to accumulate more than $25,000 in assets outside of the value of their primary home and any defined benefit plans in which they may participate.[6] Many attribute the low savings to the emergence of the consumer-driven American economy, where society's growing propensity to consume is a clear diversion from the more frugal behavior of earlier generations. Consumerism, not saving, is the primary driver of our economic system and has become entrenched as part of the American economic psyche. The result: the steady decline of savings rates in recent decades to a negative rate today, as shown below.

U.S. Personal Savings Rate as a Percentage of Disposable Personal Income (National Income and Product Accounts)



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, National Income and Product Accounts of the United States, 2007.

[6] Ruth Helman, Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Jack VanDerhel, and Craig Copeland, "The Retirement System in Transition: The 2007 Retirement Confidence Survey," *EBRI Issue Brief No. 304*, Employee Benefits Research Institute, April 2007.

This trend in personal savings rates has also impacted retirement savings, which continues to be less than adequate. Since 2000, only seven in 10 Americans say they have saved any money for retirement and even fewer say they are currently doing so. One in four says they have no retirement savings at all, and of those who have put money aside for retirement, seven in 10 have accumulated less than $10,000.[7]

Americans are not planners

In addition, Americans for the most part are not proactive financial planners, particularly when it comes to retirement. In a recent LIMRA study, only half of pre-retirees aged 55 to 70 had sought the help of a financial planner or advisor. Far fewer – 16 percent – had created a formal written plan for managing their income assets and expenses during retirement. While 62 percent of this group says they intend to develop a plan in the future, only 32 percent of their retired counterparts had actually gotten around to doing so.[8] Put in a different context, the Employee Benefits Research Institute (EBRI) estimates that American workers spend an average of 19 hours planning for retirement, about the same amount of time they spend planning for the holidays.[9]

When it comes to planning for the risks associated with retirement security, comparatively few make the effort. Even when Americans do plan for retirement, however, most underestimate their long-term income needs or how long they will be retired. They typically misjudge the impact of inflation and often think they are eligible for Social Security sooner than they are. Many count on benefits – like retiree health benefits – that are fast disappearing.[10] It's also common to overlook additional medical expenses and the cost of caregiving that so many retirees encounter. Only one in three looks into or purchases a long-term care insurance plan; one in five does the same for a Medicare supplement plan.[11]

Americans lack basic understanding of risk

The lack of understanding of the risks that can undermine one's retirement security is evident in how workers manage their retirement portfolios. When the stock market is rising, people tend to accept it as the norm. When it dips, they become concerned, but fail to acknowledge their own culpability. Indeed, two in three American workers somewhat or strongly agree that they (or their spouse) are knowledgeable about investments and investment savings. Almost as many believe it is not necessary to be sophisticated investors to manage their savings in retirement.[12]

Evidence suggests, however, that this confidence is misplaced. People tend to overestimate their expected investment returns. In many cases, they do not understand the basic differences between various types of

[7] Ibid.
[8] LIMRA International. *Retirement Planning: Is It Happening?* 2006.
[9] Ruth Helman, Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Jack VanDerhel, and Craig Copeland, 2007.
[10] Ibid.
[11] LIMRA International, 2006.
[12] Ruth Helman, Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Jack VanDerhel, and Craig Copeland, 2007.

investment products.[13] It is not too surprising, therefore, that one in three 401(k) plan participants in 2005 had not allocated any savings to equity funds, the higher-yielding option that most experts feel is critical for achieving retirement savings needs.[14]

Clearly, retirement security for most American workers today is tenuous at best. They're not saving enough and too many are not saving at all. Employees, in most cases, lack the fundamental knowledge about and appreciation for the many factors that can impact a worker's retirement lifestyle. Americans, for the most part, have not responded to the shifting responsibility with more personal accountability for their financial well-being. They are not planning accordingly.

Disability and retirement

The risks that accompany the shift to more personal responsibility for creating retirement financial security are widespread and varied. One such growing but often overlooked risk is losing the ability to earn a living due to a disability. While savings is the most important asset a person can have when he or she reaches retirement, a person's ability to earn a living may be his or her most important asset when preparing for retirement. Unfortunately, the ability to earn money is anything but certain. Regardless of age, disability is a threat to everyone's present and future financial well-being. Yet, it is a risk that seldom enters into financial planning, and rarely is correlated with planning for retirement. As noted by Jacob S. Hacker:

> *Studies consistently suggest that we are good at some kinds of risk assessment and very bad at others. Unfortunately, the kinds of risks that we face today – diffuse, interwoven, mounting, uncertain – are precisely those we are most likely to overlook. Economic losses for families are often like system failures in engineering – they cascade from seemingly small events into major crises. Yet few of us worry much about small events that can set off the chain.*[15]

When it comes to the possibility of experiencing a disability, most Americans are ambivalent or even in denial. They tend to think of themselves as being invincible: "It's not going to happen to me." Despite these denials, disabilities do occur, and not just to older people, as one popular misconception holds. According to the Social Security Administration, close to half of all workers receiving Social Security Disability Insurance benefits are in their 20s, 30s or 40s.[16]

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[13] LIMRA International, the Society of Actuaries, and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, *Public Misperceptions about Retirement Security*, 2005.
[14] Investment Company Institute, "Appendix: Additional Figures for the EBRI/ICI Participant-Directed Retirement Plan Data Collection Project for Year-End 2005," *Research Perspective*, 12:1A, August 2006.
[15] Jacob S. Hacker, 2006, p. 168.
[16] Social Security Administration, Office of Policy, 2007.

Serious disabilities caused by both accidents and illnesses have increased dramatically among the workforce – 35 percent since 2000.[17] This trend is expected to continue in light of the aging population, the growth of life-extending medical technologies and the declining general health of the population. Interestingly, much of the growth in the rate of disability can be traced to personal behavior choices. An example is the so-called obesity "epidemic," with estimates that obesity in the American population will run as high as 41 percent by 2015. Personal health-related disability will no doubt be an even bigger issue in the future.[18] As the rate of disability grows among the American workforce, the negative financial impact of losing one's ability to earn a living will continue to cascade into the retirement years.

What is the likelihood of becoming disabled? The facts are eye-opening. Citing a variety of public and private sources, the Council for Disability Awareness (CDA) provides some insights on its "Disability Can Happen" Web site:[19]

- Three in 10 workers entering the work force today will become disabled before retiring.
- One in seven workers can expect to be disabled for five years or more before retirement.
- A disabling injury occurs every 2 seconds.

Unfortunately, most Americans have little understanding of the likelihood of experiencing a disability. A recent CDA survey of workers found:[20]

- 90 percent underestimate their own chances of becoming disabled.
- 85 percent express little or no concern that they might suffer a disability lasting three months or longer.
- 56 percent do not realize that the chances of becoming disabled have risen over the past five years.

Disability is a dark cloud threatening everyone's financial well-being – and its prevalence continues to increase. How will people manage financially if a disability prevents them from earning a living? Most workers aren't really informed and are not planning accordingly.

In fact, nearly six in 10 workers have not discussed how they would manage an income-limiting disability.[21] Misperceptions about employer programs, the role of government and the adequacy of personal safety nets like Social Security and workers' compensation abound. Most people are not discussing the far-reaching economic impact of a disability today on their long-term financial security, even into their retirement years. As

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[17] Ibid.
[18] MSNBC.com, "75 Percent of Americans Overweight By 2015," http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/19845784/.
[19] Council for Disability Awareness, "Disability Statistics," http://disabilitycanhappen.org/chances_disability/disability_stats.asp.
[20] Council for Disability Awareness, 2007 *Disability Awareness Survey*, 2007.
[21] Council for Disability Awareness, *2007 Disability Awareness Survey*, 2007, http://disabilitycanhappen.org/docs/Survey_Summary.pdf.

our society continues to migrate toward a personal responsibility model for financial security, Americans need to be looking at all the risks that can jeopardize their personal "financial fitness."

Consider these relevant facts:

As a nation, we carry a heavy debt load. Currently, household borrowing is equivalent to 80 percent of the nation's economy, one-third larger than it was in the early 1990s.[22] The average credit card debt is $9,300, an all-time high.[23] Plus, two out of three American households live paycheck to paycheck and three in four do not have enough savings to meet short-term emergencies.[24, 25] This is alarming, since according to a recent survey, the No. 1 financial concern for employees today is "having enough money to pay bills during a period of sudden income loss."[26] Losing income for even a short period of time can be financially devastating for most Americans.

Disability causes nearly 50 percent of all mortgage foreclosures, compared with 2 percent caused by death. Half of all personal bankruptcies in the United States are attributable to illness or medical bills. More than a quarter of early retirements result from disabilities. [27] Personal assets, which are becoming a more important contributor to retirement security, are at greater risk from disability than many may think.

When income stops, so do contributions to a 401(k) plan, even those from a person's employer. An interruption in deposits into a 401(k) retirement plan can have far-reaching effects on retirement income. According to one estimate, a 45-year-old earning $50,000 and contributing 10 percent of his income annually would have a balance at age 65 of close to $247,000, assuming an investment return of 8 percent. If he were disabled at 50, he would have $101,000 and no employer contributions from the time of disability. If he were disabled for only 2 years, his account would be reduced by $30,500; if disabled for 5 years, it would be $68,400 less.[28] Two in three employees are unaware that if their income stops because of a disability, their employer can no longer make contributions to their 401(k) plan.[29]

Virtually all workers participate in the Social Security Disability Insurance program. However, the relative adequacy of this universal safety blanket is diminishing. To qualify for benefits, a difficult and time-consuming process, the disability must be severe enough to keep a person out of work

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[22] Department of Commerce, *National Income and Product Accounts, 2004,* U.S. Department of Labor.
[23] David Wallechinsky, "Is the American Dream Still Possible?" *Parade Magazine,* April 23, 2006.
[24] Ibid.
[25] A.G. Edwards, *National Investment Watch Survey,* 2004.
[26] MetLife, *Study of Employee Benefits Trends,* 2007, p. 21.
[27] Employee Benefits Research Institute, "When Do Workers Plan to Retire, vs. Actually Doing So?" *Fast Facts from EBRI,* #50, May 1, 2007.
[28] The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, *Insurance & Behavior – Spotlight on IDI,* 2006.
[29] Ibid.

for more than 12 months. In 2005, less than half – 39 percent – of the 2.1 million workers who applied for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits were approved.[30] For those who do quality, the current average monthly SSDI benefit is only $978, barely enough to cover normal living expenses.[31]

Many Americans fail to connect lost income today with safeguarding assets and protecting their lifestyle in retirement. Just like a systems failure, however, what might seem like a minor setback today can cascade into a major financial crisis both in the near and long term. As the shift to personal responsibility accelerates, the need to evaluate the risks associated with a disability-related loss of income and plan accordingly are critical for working Americans

Disability planning

If the likelihood of disability is growing and the potential financial consequences are so severe, why is so little disability planning done? The primary reason centers on the fact that most Americans lack awareness about the threat of disability, resulting in a significant underestimation of the financial risk disability poses to them. Disability, and therefore disability planning, are not "top of mind" for most people. There are too many other financial concerns that take priority. Furthermore, it doesn't appear that most employers sense the role that they can play in the disability planning process. Only 30 percent of employees in private industry have access to some type of long-term disability insurance through their employers.[32]

But, even for those who are conscientious planners, the risk disability presents to their long-term financial security and, in particular, to their retirement security is seldom addressed. When it comes to retirement planning, financial advisors tend to focus on determining retirement income needs, developing savings goals and discussing asset allocation, and don't discuss some of the other relevant risks, like the potential loss of income during a person's earlier "accumulation" years.[33]

Countering the trend

Is disability a threat to retirement security? The answer is unequivocally "yes." What is more, with disability on the rise, it is posing a growing threat to many workers and their families who are already struggling to accumulate a suitable retirement nest egg. This growing threat needs to be addressed.
Focusing on improving personal health or one's physical fitness is an approach for dealing with the growth of worker disability that is gaining more attention. According to a study by Mercer Consulting and Marsh, four in five employers now agree that improving employee health positively impacts employee productivity and recognize it as a core value.[34] Personal behaviors that cause many illnesses and accidents resulting in loss of income can, and should, be changed.

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[30] Social Security Administration, Office of Disability and Income Security Programs.
[31] Social Security Administration, Fact Sheet, January 31, 2007.
[32] U.S. Department of Labor, *National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in Private Industry in the U.S.*, March 2006.
[33] LIMRA International, *Financial Plans –Real and Imagined – Held by the Affluent*, 2002.
[34] Mercer and Marsh, *Mercer/Marsh Survey on Health, Productivity and Absence Management Programs 2007*.

Certainly, living a healthier lifestyle is an admirable goal for employees and employers alike. But the "financial fitness" of Americans also needs to be addressed with comparable vigor. It starts with acknowledging the realities of the likelihood of disability and recognizing the short- and long-term financial risks that can follow. Once that awareness occurs, the planning process can begin. While the threat of disability can never be eliminated, the financial consequences can be effectively managed with good planning.

Raising public awareness

The financial threat posed by disability is, in many ways, an intellectual black hole that needs to be traversed – and there may be no better time than now. The challenge begins with raising the public's awareness about this growing threat. As this new era of individual responsibility emerges, the necessity to spread the message about the risk disability poses for long-term financial security becomes more important.

Who shoulders the responsibility for communicating the message? The call to action has a broad reach and demands a collaborative effort that includes:

- **Employers.** Not only do employers have high credibility and influence with employees, they also provide a unique forum for accessing information and providing assistance. If done effectively through employers, the spread of information about disability planning should be a win-win situation. Employees will gain better insight into how to manage unforeseen contingencies, and they also will learn how to live more healthy lifestyles, reducing the risk of disability. Employers will benefit from the increased productivity of a healthier workforce.

- **Planners, advisors and consultants**. As a primary source of one-on-one financial information and education, these individuals share a unique role in guiding personal discussions in a direction that recognizes the importance of disability as a financial risk and providing appropriate solutions to manage it. They will need to more consciously understand the risks of disability and the broad impact it can have on the financial well-being of their clients. In addition, they will need to become better advocates for disability planning, just as they are advocates for medical management, estate and retirement planning, and asset accumulation and diversification.

- **The media.** As the purveyors of information exchange, the media – both in general outlets and in the more targeted realm of the financial pundits – shares a responsibility for ensuring that the message is spread in an easily accessed and understandable way. The media should be instrumental in moving disability planning to a more prominent place in the public dialogue about personal financial responsibility.

Regardless of the sources of information, broad-scale efforts to create awareness of the risks disability presents to Americans' financial fitness, particularly in retirement, will spotlight the issue and encourage behavioral change. However, success requires an integrated campaign that ties disability risk management at the individual level to the achievement of long-term financial goals through sound, proactive planning. This includes:

- Communicating the threat of disability – and doing it over and over again.
- Demonstrating the interaction of long-term lifestyle goals with the ability to earn a living and what can happen when that ability is compromised.
- Educating the public about the multiple financial risks associated with disability and ways to effectively manage those risks, including living healthier lifestyles and planning proactively.
- Encouraging basic financial literacy so that Americans better understand how to maneuver in an environment of increased financial responsibility.

Such an approach will help mitigate the impact that disability during the working years can have on a worker's financial well-being, including his or her future retirement security. The call to action is clear: in this new era of personal financial responsibility, we need to encourage American workers to engage in disability financial planning, with a greater awareness of the risks, to help them make more responsible decisions to secure their future financial well-being.

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About the Council for Disability Awareness (CDA) and the author:
The Council for Disability Awareness (CDA) is a non-profit group dedicated to helping the American workforce become aware of the growing likelihood of disability and its financial consequences. The CDA engages in communications, research and educational activities that provide information and helpful resources to wage earners, their families, the media, employers and others who are concerned about disability and the impact it can have on wage earners and their families. The author, Robert G. Taylor, is president of the CDA.

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