The Role of Employers in Early Intervention of Mental Illness and Depression

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A Mentally Healthy Workforce: It's Good for Business

- The facts are in!
- Investing in a mentally healthy workforce is a sound business investment that will produce measurable outcomes…..
  - Lower total medical costs
  - Lower absenteeism/presenteeism
  - Decrease disability costs
  - Healthier, more productive employees

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Clarification!

Mental illnesses are medical illnesses.

- Misconceptions about mental illness are pervasive in our culture

- Lack of understanding contribute to cultural stigmas

- Misconceptions can do irreparable harm to individuals with a legitimate illness

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Mental Illness Has Many Forms

- Depression

- Anxiety Disorders

- Substance Abuse

- Bipolar Disorder

- Eating, sleep and personality disorders

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

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Mental health   Mental illness

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A continuum

The Cost to Employers

- Untreated, undiagnosed and undertreated mental illness hits the bottom line hard!

- Direct cost impacts
  - Healthcare services
  - Pharmacy
  - EAP services
  - Short/long term disability
  - Laboratory/diagnostic procedures

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Facts

- Medical and mental illnesses are tightly linked. Many heart disease patients develop depression.

- Individuals with depression who don't receive treatment use 2 – 4 times more healthcare resources than other enrollees.

- 13% of the adults suffer from anxiety disorders. These individuals see a doctor three to five times more often than those without similar disorders.

Source: Partnership for Workplace Mental Health 2006

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Indirect Costs

- As with other chronic diseases the indirect costs of mental illness exceed direct.

- Impacts
  - Absenteeism
  - Presenteeism
  - Increased Worker's Comp claims
  - Employee turnover

Facts

- Employees with depression cost employers $44 billion per year in lost productivity.

- Employees with depression or anxiety disorders lose 2.2 hours of productivity per workday due to their illness.

- Due to negative influence on concentration, mental illness contributes significantly to productivity decline.

Source: Partnership for Workplace Mental Health 2006

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Constant Reminder

- "This is not about numbers; it's about people!"

  » Ronald E. Bachman - PriceWaterhouseCooper

  Good News! For many, mental health treatments are effective. 80% of all treated for depression have positive outcomes, allowing them to return to satisfactory, functional lives.

The Maine Business Picture

Background

- PIER Program is a treatment research program for those between 12 and 25 in the Greater Portland area

- Community outreach is a major component

- Goals is to increase awareness of the early warning signs and increase referrals

- Focus on education and healthcare professionals

- Attempts made to engage business community but without focus

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Employer Outreach Development

- Need to reach 18 – 25 year olds who were not in college

- Decided to re-visit employers as an outreach audience

- Collaborative effort with MMC's Lifeline Workplace Wellness Program

- Capitalized on experience, success and trusted relationships with employers

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Issues Identified

- Role of the employer

- Stigma and privacy

- Unclear about what benefits were offered and utilization rates

- Unclear if this was a topic on the radar for employers

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Employer Outreach Plan

Phase I

- Employer survey

- Executive interviews

Phase II

- Employer cost analysis of utilization of mental health benefits and services

Phase III

- Employee survey

Phase IV

- Develop materials and messages/implement employer outreach

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Employer Survey

- 118 employers

- Owners & HR directors

- Web-based

- Anonymous

- 4 counties

Employee Survey

- 355 full-time employees

- Web-based

- Anonymous

- 4 counties

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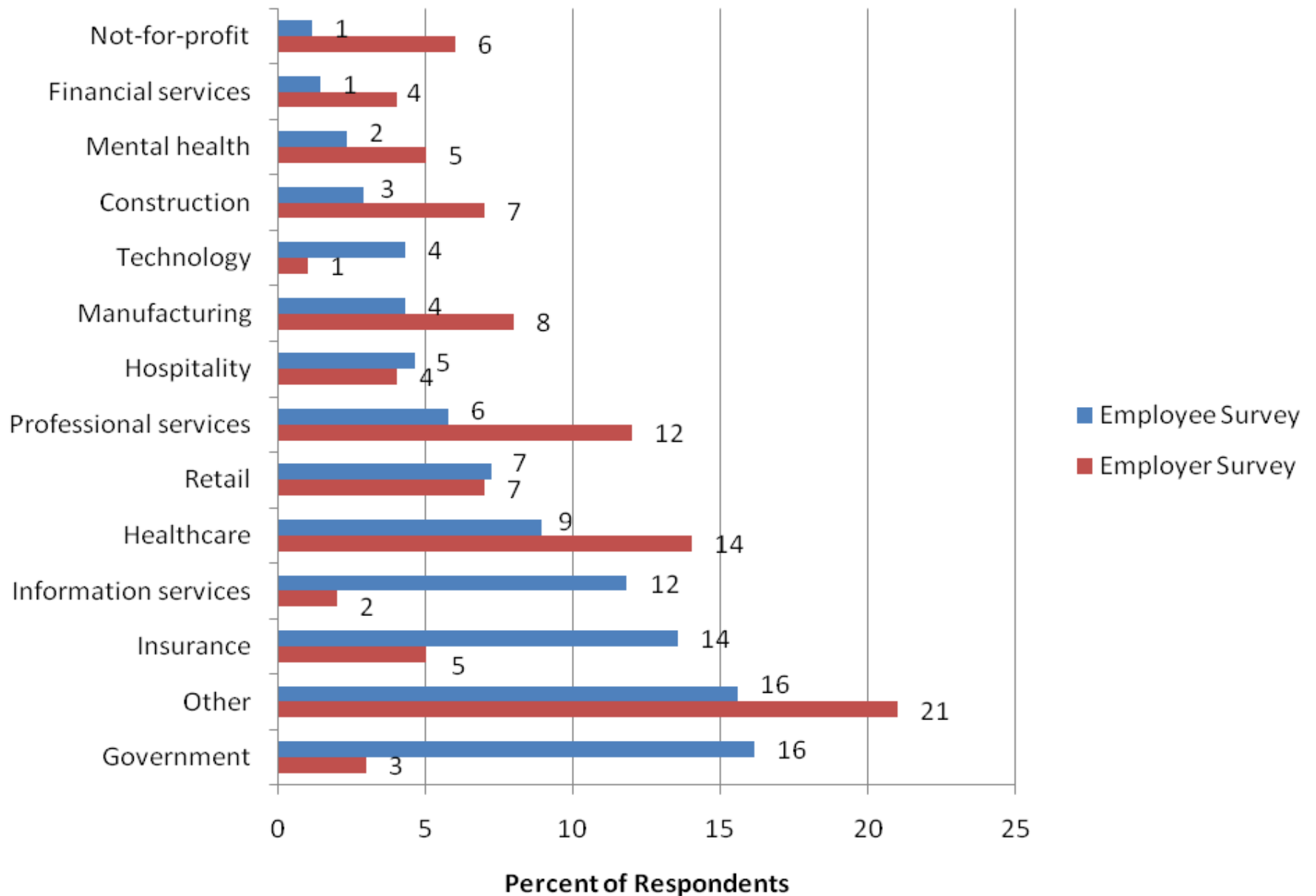MaineHealth

Figure 2: Industries Represented
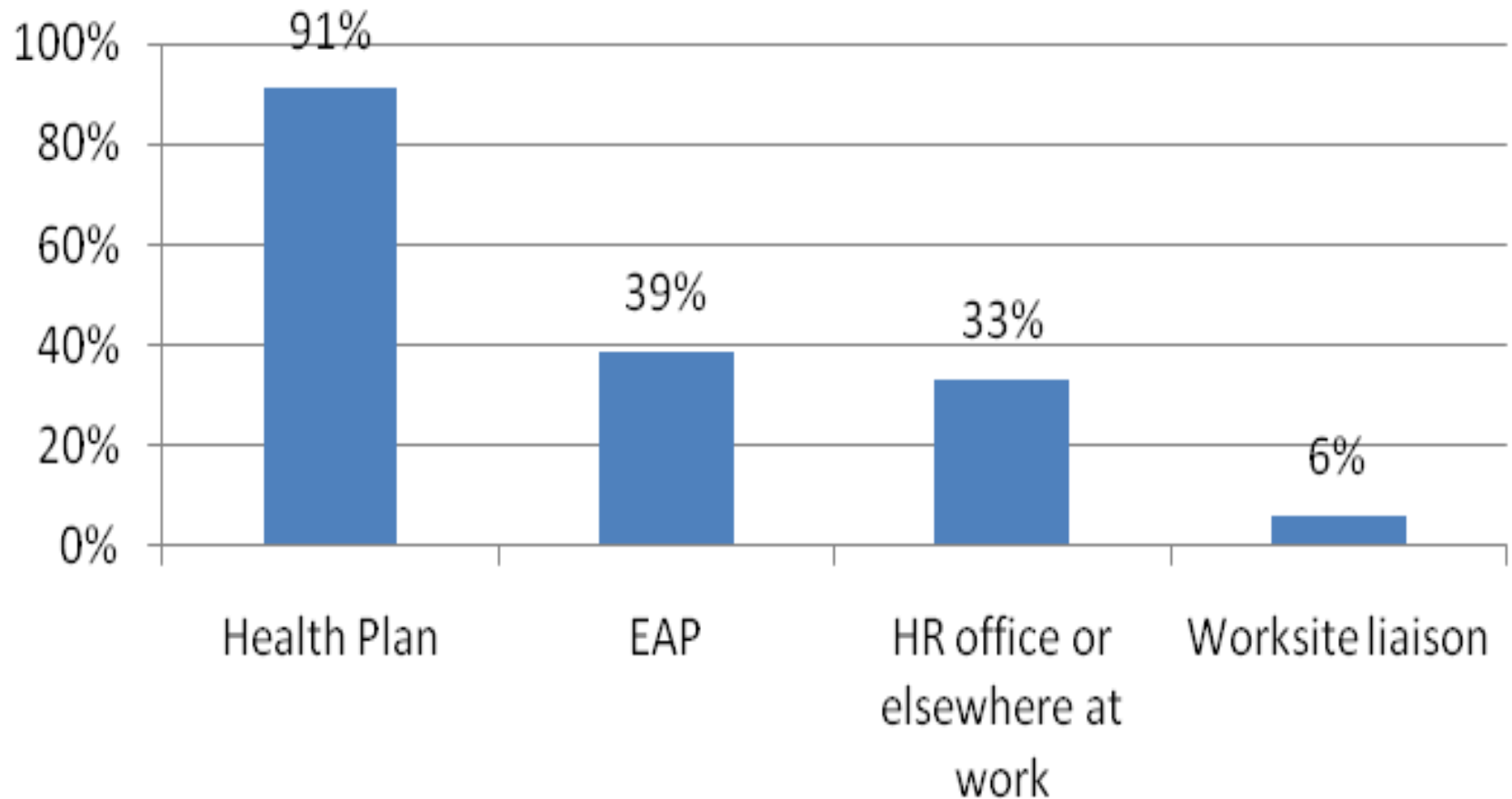
Figure 3: Systems and Resources Offered for Mental Health Issues

Figure 8: Comparative Perceptions About the Impact of Mental Health Issues (% Who "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" with the Statements)
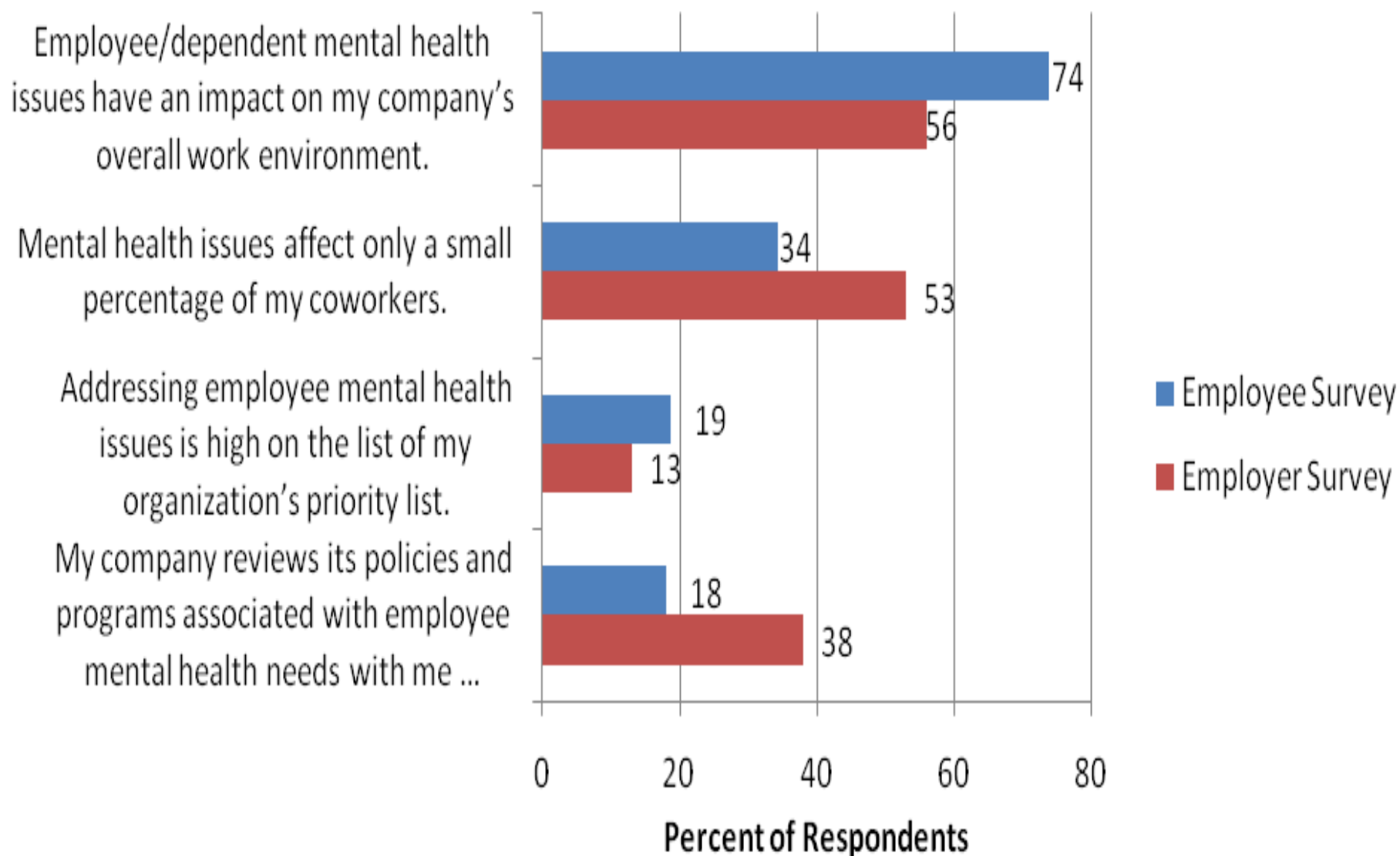
Statement	Employee Survey	Employer Survey
Employee/dependent mental health issues have an impact on my company's overall work environment.	74	56
Mental health issues affect only a small percentage of my coworkers.	34	53
Addressing employee mental health issues is high on the list of my organization's priority list.	19	13
My company reviews its policies and programs associated with employee mental health needs with me ...	18	38

Percent of Respondents

Figure 10: Looking to Employers for Support
(% Who "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" with the Statement)

If I had a mental health issue, I would look to my employer to provide support and be a resource for more information.
- Employee Survey: 46
- Employer Survey: 39

If I had a family member affected by a mental health issue, I would look to my employer to provide support and be a resource.
- Employee Survey: 39
- Employer Survey: 33

Percent of Respondents
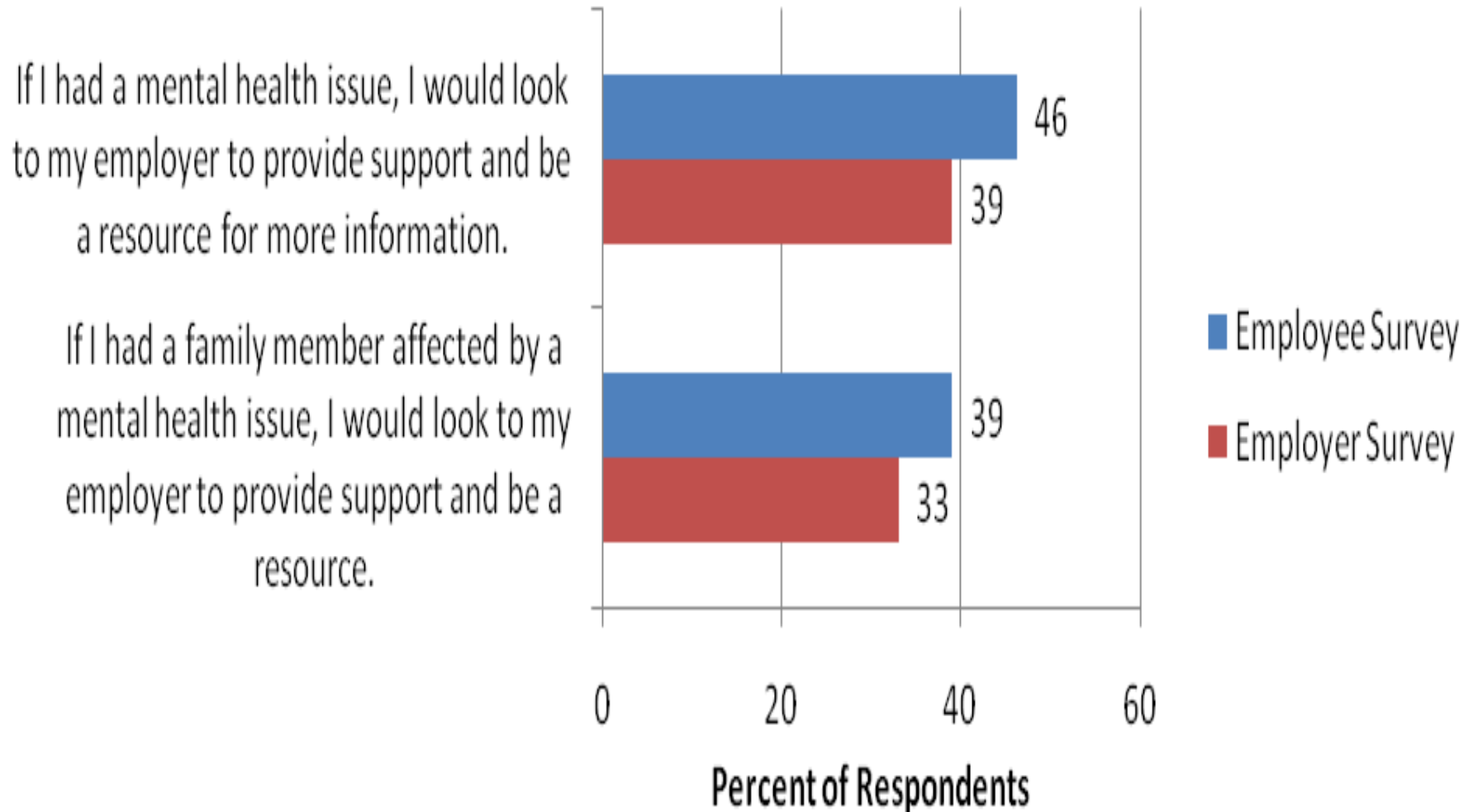
Figure 12: General Perceptions of Employer Support for Mental Health Issues (% Who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree")
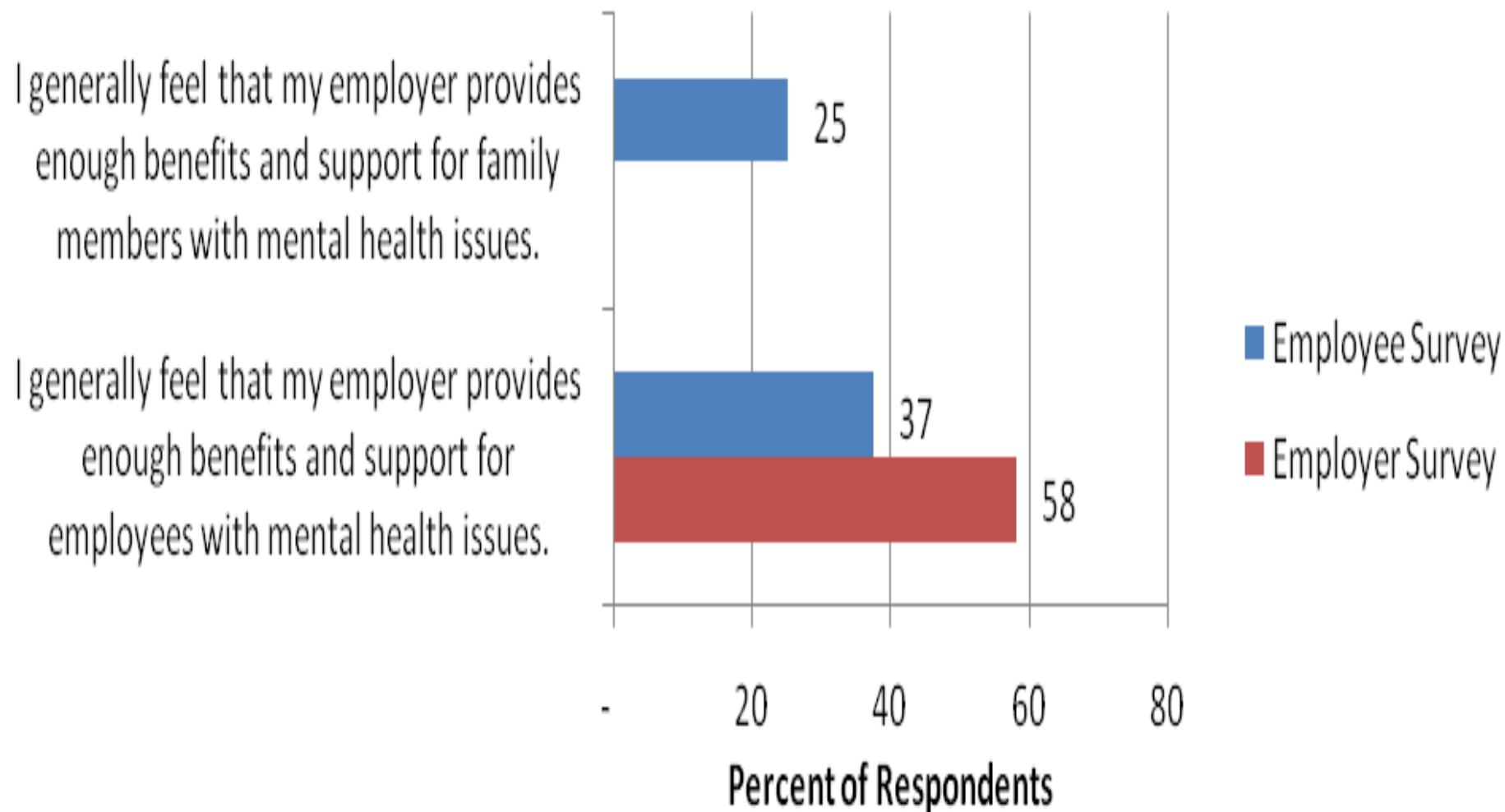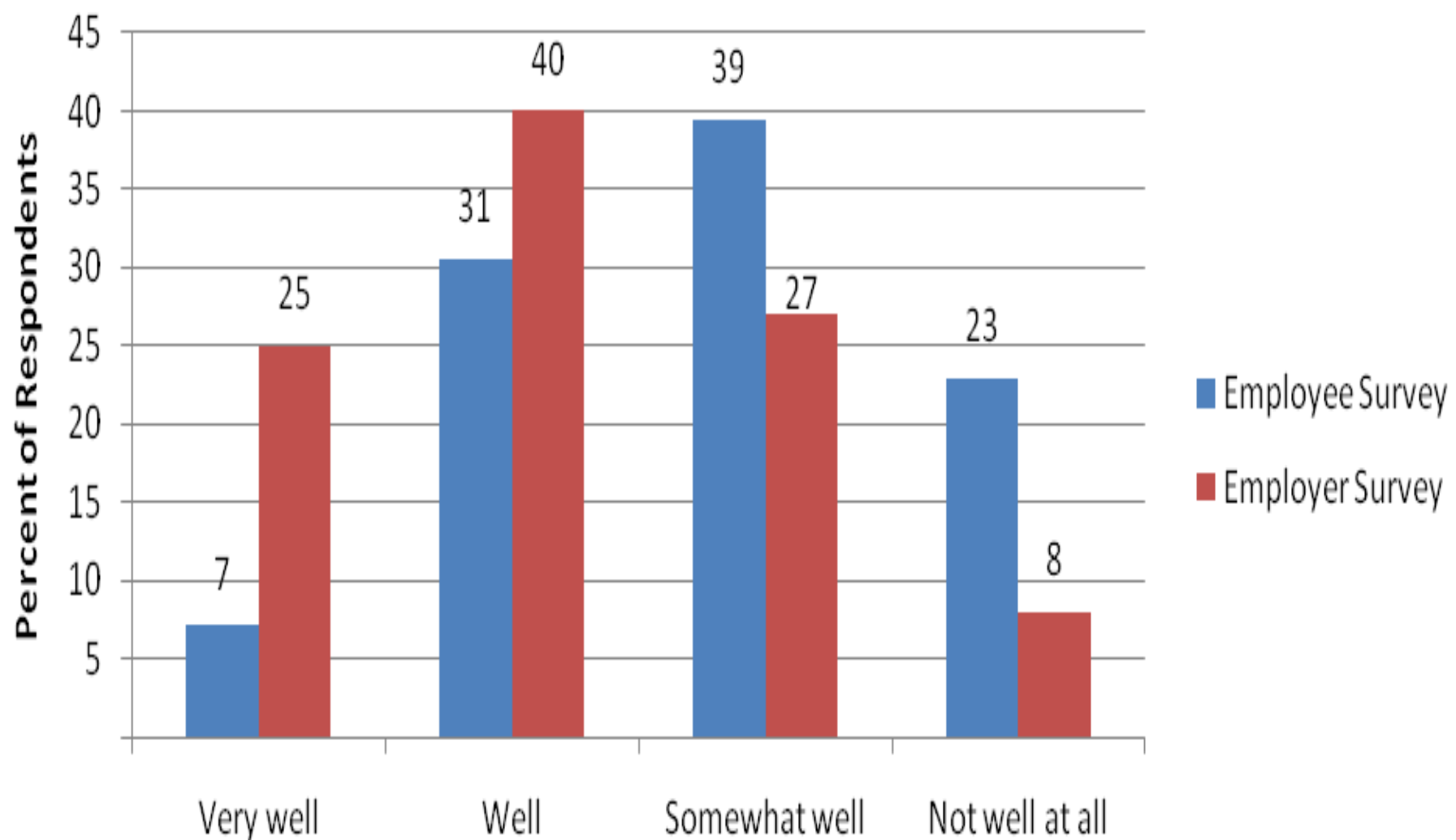
Figure 13: Overall Support of Employees Affected by Mental Health Issues

Executive Interviews

- Conducted with seven employers

  - Hannaford Brothers

  - Holden Agency

  - Dunkin Donuts franchise holder

  - MEMIC

  - Baker, Newman and Noyes

  - Spring Harbor Hospital

  - Risbara Construction

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EAPs and Wellness Programs

- Information source but not major solution to mental health issues

- Wellness programs primarily at larger companies

- Mental health usually not part of wellness program

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Employers' Roles

- Mental health benefits in health plan

- Balance between privacy and assistance

- Skill building opportunity for managers

- Not a service provider but an information resources

- Flexibility and resources are needed for employees

Priorities and Programs

- Mental health is a high priority but difficult to become involved

- Support for inclusion with wellness but with focus on resiliency, not stress reductions

- Because it's difficult, mental health issues are lower priority

- Would welcome information or training

The Maine Business Picture

- Recent PIER survey of 5 Maine employers

- Ranged from 7-5,000 employees

- Profit/non profit sectors

- Aggregated/deidentifed data

- Attempted data collection:

  – Mental health claims

  – EAP utilization

  – Prescription drug claims

  – Absenteeism

  – Worker's compensation

  – Short and long disability

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Outcomes

- The ability to gather quality data was challenging.

- Insurance carriers vary in how they report information. Trended reports were difficult to produce and analyze.

- Little data on mental health impact on EAP services, worker's comp and STD/LTD.

- Where available, health care and pharmacy costs represented roughly 5% of annual costs.

  Ex. One employer spent $13,000 on pharmacy, out of a total of $130,000.

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Conclusions

- Significant variance in data availability

- Consistent patterns of pharmacy utilization for mental health related drugs

- Larger, self funded employers have greater capacity to gather and analyze data

- Little information available to analyze the impact of mental illness on indirect cost

- Clear need to elevate the priority of mental health related cost information to the same plane as other chronic diseases

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Strategies/Resources

- PIER materials and resources

- Websites
  - www.preventmentalillness.org
  - www.changemymind.org

- Partnership for Workplace Mental Health
  - A Mentally Healthy Workforce - It's Good for Business
- Web:
www.workplacementalhealth.org/pdf/popartnershipbrochure05.pdf

- Workplaces That Thrive - A Resource for Creating Mental Health Friendly Work Environments

- Web: www.samhsa.org

- Mental Health Association of Minnesota
  - Mental Illness in the Workplace: A Resource Guide for Minnesota Employers

- Web: www.mentalhealthmn.org

Questions