

## FAMILY FRIENDLY BUSINESS PRACTICES

### Overview

Americans are working longer hours with greater demands on their performance mainly due to a growing global economy and increased use of technology in the workplace.<sup>1</sup> Escalating workplace demands have put greater stress on individuals as they try to balance the demands of their job with personal responsibilities<sup>2</sup> and there is significant growth in the number of salaried employees caring for children and infants.<sup>3</sup> Individual stress levels have been exacerbated by the growing number of dual-earning families, in which more mothers are entering the workforce while fathers are increasingly sharing in the personal responsibilities of family life.<sup>4</sup> As of 2012, 75 percent of households were dual-earning, representing an increase of 45 percent from 1960 and a 39 percent decrease (since 1960) in households where only the father is employed.<sup>5</sup> Research has also shown a rise in the number of young fathers in dual-earning families who are more likely to have small children concurrent with an increase in the amount of time fathers are spending with their children.<sup>6</sup>

The increase in shared roles is correlated with both men and women reporting increased feelings of stress and difficulty in managing their work and family demands.<sup>7</sup> For some workers, especially those between 40-59 years old, there is added family responsibility as they also support their aging parents. Workers who identify with this “sandwich generation” report providing both financial and emotional support for their grown children and aging parents. This has led to individuals reporting increased financial stress, as well as greater work-life conflict.<sup>8</sup>

Society is beginning to recognize the toll these increasing demands and accompanying stressors can take on employees and their families. Many businesses today understand the value of adopting family-friendly practices that help to support employees in both raising their children, as well as caring for their aging relatives. Reducing employee stress can help employees be healthier overall and make them more productive when they are at work.

### Family Friendly Business Practices

Family friendly business practices are one avenue through which employers and employees can help foster a more balanced lifestyle.<sup>9</sup> Family friendly business practices refer to an array of employer-offered benefits that lead to greater employee autonomy in creating a work schedule that best fits their needs and combats the mounting strain placed on work-life balance. Common practices that fall under this umbrella are flexible scheduling, telecommuting policies, and child-care benefits.

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Mishel, “Vast Majority of Wage Earners are Working Harder, and for Not Much More: Trends in U.S. Work Hours and Wages over 1979-2007,” *Economic Policy Institute* 348(2013), <http://www.epi.org/publication/ib348-trends-us-work-hours-wages-1979-2007/>

<sup>2</sup> Rebecca J. Rosen, “Money-Rich and Time-Poor: Life in Two-Income Households,” *The Atlantic*, November 4, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/11/work-life-balance-pew-report/414028/>

<sup>3</sup> Anne Weisberg and Ellen Galinsky, “Family Matters: The Business Case for Investing in the Transition to Parenthood,” *Families and Work Institute*, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> “The Rise in Dual Income Households,” *The Pew Research Center*, 2012, [http://www.pewresearch.org/ft\\_dual-income-households-1960-2012-2/](http://www.pewresearch.org/ft_dual-income-households-1960-2012-2/)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Weisberg and Galinsky, “Investing in the Transition to Parenthood,” 2014

<sup>7</sup> “Changing Needs of American Working Families,” *WFD Consulting*, 2013

<sup>8</sup> Kim Parker and Eileen Patton, “The Sandwich Generation: Rising Financial Burdens for Middle-Aged Americans,” *Pew Research Center*, January 30, 2013, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/01/30/the-sandwich-generation/>

<sup>9</sup> Erin Kelly and Phyllis Moen, “Rethinking the Clockwork of Work: Why Schedule Control May Pay off at Work and at Home,” *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 9:4(2007), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4295783/>

- Flexible scheduling and telecommuting policies are those that allow for a less rigid working schedule (i.e., not bound to a 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. working shift) and leniency on working location.<sup>10</sup> Flexible working schedules are those that allow for employees to come into work or structure their working time in a way that is most effective for their work needs. It does not impact expected weekly hourly requirements, but allows for more fluidity in how those hours are met.<sup>11</sup> This affords employees the ability to attend to their personal responsibilities by allowing them to meet those needs during traditional work hours, as is often necessary. For example, in a flexible working environment, an employee can more easily schedule doctor appointments or appointments at their child’s school since they are not bound by a traditional work day schedule.
- Telecommuting policies give employees the option to accomplish their work demands outside of the traditional office environment. It is important to note that there is a large spectrum of telecommuting policies; some may allow workers to work outside of an office setting for much of their work time, while others may only allow their employees to work from other locations sporadically and for a variety of specific reasons.<sup>12</sup>
- Childcare benefits are approached in three main ways: on-site, near-site, or subsidized, or any combination of the three. For example, a company may offer on-site, subsidized child care or provide subsidized waivers for offsite childcare. Offering childcare benefits allows employees to more easily plan around their children, without having to schedule alternate childcare, and can be an option for mothers to more easily transition back to work.<sup>13</sup>

## Family Friendly Business Practices and Health

### *Lack of Family Friendly Business Practices: Pathways to Poor Health Outcomes*

As discussed above, today’s workforce faces increasing demands on their time from all directions, forcing workers to constantly balance work and personal lives. For workers with infants and/or children, the balance can be even harder to maintain.<sup>14</sup> This stress can have a detrimental impact on an individual’s health, as prolonged periods of stress have been shown to cause poor mental and physical health.

Stress can cause feelings of anxiety and depression, as well as have an impact on sleep patterns and other wellness habits necessary for positive mental health outcomes.<sup>15</sup> In addition, work stress can compound the effects of anxiety and depression by creating a tenuous, conflictual work environment, generating a perpetuating cycle of increased dissatisfaction and mental anguish.<sup>16</sup> These same stress pathways can have both physical and mental health impacts. For example, elevated levels of stress hormones have been implicated in the development and/or exacerbation of weight gain and obesity, in addition to elevated blood pressure and increased strain on cardiac functioning.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, studies have shown that negative impacts can be seen beyond the clinical pathways, deleteriously impacting important wellness activities, such as getting adequate sleep, remaining active, and eating a healthy diet. Work stress not only

<sup>10</sup>“Flexible Work Arrangements: A Discussion Paper,” Employment and Social Development Canada, May 2016

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Jacquelyn Barcenas-Frausto, “Family-Supportive Policies: the Employer-Sponsored Child-Care Approach as an Influence of the Relationship Between Work and Family Outcomes,” *The Business Review, Cambridge* 14:1(2009)

<sup>14</sup> Mishel, “Vast Majority of Wage Earners,” 2013

<sup>15</sup> Jens Bonde, “Psychological Factors at Work and Risk of Depression: A Systematic Review of the Epidemiological Evidence,” *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 65(2007), doi: 10.1136/oem.2007.038430

<sup>16</sup> Ulf Lundberg, “Stress Hormones in Health and Illness: The Roles of Work and Gender,” *Journal of Psychoneuroendocrinology* 30 (2005), doi: 10.1016/j.psychoneu.2005.03.014

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

creates a biological strain on the body, but can have compounding effects by having a negative impact on wellness routines and mental health.<sup>18</sup>

Work stress has also been linked to increases in binge drinking and can even contribute to violence against children.<sup>19</sup> The association between long working hours and risky drinking behavior indicates the role of alcohol as a coping mechanism for stress. Although risky drinking behavior itself is a product of stress, it can lead to detrimental chronic physical and mental health issues, such as cardiovascular disease and depression.<sup>20</sup> Increases in violent behavior also have been linked to perceived feelings of stress, isolation, and lack of support.<sup>21</sup> Stress has also been linked to increased risk of child abuse.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Family Friendly Business Practices: Pathways to Better Health Outcomes***

While experiences of unrelenting stress have been shown to cause negative physical and mental health effects, research has demonstrated several ways in which a more balanced work-life experience can have mediating health effects. Studies have shown that spending more time with a social group can help reduce stress and conflict by offering necessary support when an individual is experiencing distress.<sup>23</sup> Engaging with a social group has been shown to improve health through the power of social influence by normalizing and encouraging healthy choices through modeling behaviors, such as engaging in physical activity and reduction in substance use.<sup>24</sup> The sense of belonging created through strong social support can mediate the impact of mental health issues and violence by creating a feeling of individual self-efficacy and self-esteem. These life skills then result in a greater likelihood that those experiencing distress will access healthy forms of support to cope and mediate the impact.<sup>25</sup> Family time is a major factor in maintaining physical and mental health, not only for adults, but for children, too, as adults can model appropriate wellness behavior and balanced lifestyle.<sup>26</sup>

Flexible work schedules and telecommuting policies have been shown to reduce employee stress by giving workers greater autonomy over their time, allowing for more time spent with social groups and families and more flexibility when personal needs arise.<sup>27</sup> Instituting these policies has been proven to reduce family conflict and even increase employee work performance by ultimately reducing the negative effects caused by work-related stress.<sup>28</sup> Promoting positive parenting activities, such as breastfeeding, through employer-sponsored childcare also has been shown to reduce stress, as well as have real health

<sup>18</sup> Kerry Joyce et al., “Flexible Working Conditions and their Effects on Employee Health and Wellbeing,” *Cochrane Public Health Group*, February 17, 2010, doi: 10.1002/14651858.CD008009.pub2

<sup>19</sup> Roos, Lahelma, and Rahkonen, “Work-Family Conflicts and Drinking Behaviors Among Employed Women and Men,” *Drug and Alcohol Dependency* 83:1(2006), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16300907/>

<sup>20</sup> Marianna Virtanen, et al., “Long Working Hours and Alcohol Use: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Published Studies and Unpublished Individual Participant Data,” *BMJ*, January 13, 2015, <http://www.bmj.com/content/350/bmj.g7772.full>

<sup>21</sup> Meagan Tucker and Christina Rodriguez, “Family Dysfunction and Social Isolation as Moderators Between Stress and Child Physical Abuse Risk,” *Journal of Family Violence* 29(2014), doi: 10.1007/s10896-013-9567-0

<sup>22</sup> “Child Abuse and Neglect: Risk and Protective Factors,” CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/riskprotectivefactors.html>

<sup>23</sup> Ichiro Kawachi and Lisa F. Berkman, “Social Ties and Mental Health,” *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 78, no. 3 (2001): 458-467, [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3455910/pdf/11524\\_2006\\_Article\\_44.pdf](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3455910/pdf/11524_2006_Article_44.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Carl A Latkin and Amy R Knowlton, “Social Network Assessments and Interventions for Health Behavior Change: a Critical Review,” *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 41, no. 3 (2015): 90-97, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4786366/>

<sup>25</sup> Kawachi and Berkman, “Social Ties and Mental Health,” 2001

<sup>26</sup> “Danish Study Finds Parenting Lengthens your Life, Especially for Women,” *Huffington Post*, December 6, 2012, [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/12/06/parenting-lengthens-life-danish-study\\_n\\_2249270.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=uk](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/12/06/parenting-lengthens-life-danish-study_n_2249270.html?utm_hp_ref=uk)

<sup>27</sup> Jennifer Swanber, et al., “Schedule control, Supervisor Support and Work Engagement: A Winning Combination for Workers in Hourly Jobs?” *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 79(2011)

<sup>28</sup> Erin Kelly, et al., “Changing Work and Work-Family Conflict: Evidence from the Work, Family, and Health Network,” *American Sociological Review* 79:3(2014), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4208075/>

benefits for the mother and child.<sup>29,30</sup> By allowing for greater employee autonomy, family friendly business practices can directly help with both stress-related chronic and mental health issues, as well as acute health concerns by reducing employee absenteeism.<sup>31</sup>

### Return on Investment for Family Friendly Business Practices

Private employers have the authority to implement all or some of the various family friendly business practice policies and can do so in a way that best fits the demands of their work environments and needs of their employees. Among human resource and leadership organizations investigating these policies, there have been reservations as to whether adopting policies that allow for greater employee flexibility will ultimately result in a less productive work force, where personal time takes precedence over work demands, as opposed to creating a more well-balanced environment. However, most research shows that allowing greater employee flexibility by instating family friendly business practices does not decrease work output, and in fact, can increase work satisfaction and reduce workforce turnover.

Beyond the benefits to employees, family friendly business practices also can have a positive impact on businesses that implement them. Allowing for more flexible schedules and offering employees options for their child care needs can go a long way in helping to reduce employee absenteeism, increase staff retention and loyalty, and reduce stress. This can help a company create a more stable workforce, attract talented employees, and ultimately have better personnel relationships.<sup>32</sup> For example, when considering the policy of on-site child care, studies have shown that employees who utilized the service found higher productivity rates, lower absenteeism, and increased worker concentration. Employees also cited on-site childcare as a deciding factor in returning to work after having children, and 23 percent of parents rejected job offers or pursued other options based on access to on-site child care.<sup>33</sup> These steps, while not always obvious, can provide significant benefits for employers by reducing the costs associated with turnover and absenteeism.

The costs of turnover and absenteeism can be substantial. A 2016 study by Trautner found that the cost of losing an employee can range from tens of thousands of dollars to nearly two-times the employee's annual salary.<sup>34</sup> Another found that the cost of a company turning over a highly skilled job is 213 percent the cost of one year's compensation for that same role.<sup>35</sup> Even retaining an employee for two years instead of three was found to save a company \$1.3 million dollars over that three-year period.<sup>36</sup> In Colorado, there was nearly a 12 percent general workforce turnover rate between 2015 and 2016, suggesting that Colorado companies could be losing money.<sup>37</sup> The costs to a company come from the time and labor spent on hiring, onboarding, training, and waiting for employees to ramp up to peak productivity; the loss of engagement, higher business error rates, and general work culture effects.

<sup>29</sup> Kate Hodal, "Breastfeeding Could Prevent 800,000 Child Deaths, Lancet Says," *The Guardian*, January 28, 2016

<sup>30</sup> Rada Dagher et al., "Determinants of Breastfeeding Initiation and Cessation Among Employed Mothers: A Prospective Cohort Study," *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* 16(2016): 194

<sup>31</sup> Joyce et al., "Flexible Working Conditions and their Effects on Employee Health and Wellbeing," 2010

<sup>32</sup> Phyllis Hope and Fred J. Rayworth, "Meeting Employees' Needs Through On-Site Child Care," *Health Manpower Management* 18.3 (1992): 15.

<sup>33</sup> Tracy Trautner, "Child care in the workplace", Michigan State University, September 14, 2016, [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/child\\_care\\_in\\_the\\_workplace](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/child_care_in_the_workplace)

<sup>34</sup> Jack Altman, "How Much Does Employee Turnover Really Cost?", *The Huffington Post*, January 19, 2017, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/how-much-does-employee-turnover-really-cost\\_us\\_587fbaf9e4b0474ad4874fb7](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/how-much-does-employee-turnover-really-cost_us_587fbaf9e4b0474ad4874fb7)

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> June Taylor, Kara Veitch, and Kim Burgess, "FY 2015-16 Workforce Report", *Colorado Division of Human Resources*, Denver, CO: 2016

Implementing policies that can encourage employees to stay with a company can result in significant savings.

Employee absenteeism also carries considerable costs for businesses. Employees stay home from work for a variety of reasons, a few of which family friendly business practices can mitigate, such as a lack of child care, personal appointments, and inclement weather. One study found that employers can lose approximately \$3,600 per year per hourly employee, or \$2,650 a year per salaried employee, due to absenteeism.<sup>38</sup> A company of 5,000 hourly employees could potentially reduce losses from absenteeism by \$7.9 million per year by implementing family friendly business practices.<sup>39</sup>

There are also positive benefits associated with helping employees reduce their stress levels. Research has found that healthcare expenditures for employees with high stress are 46 percent higher than for employees with lower levels of stress.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, stressed employees who have health issues often miss more work time due to illness, and are less productive, costing a company money through absenteeism and poor performance. Another benefit may include tax subsidies for companies that offer childcare services at any type of licensed childcare facility through the federal “employer-provided child care tax credit,” available to employers who pay a child care facility to provide child care services to their employees.<sup>41</sup> The tax credit is equal to 25 percent of the child care expenditures the company makes, but there is a limit of \$150,000 for the credit.<sup>42</sup> So while the tax credit may not cover the full cost of providing childcare to employees, it can help cover some of the costs and make the investment more feasible for companies.

Finally, there are also benefits to employees when employers implement family friendly business practices. For instance, employees can save on childcare costs when they can work from home, and have flexible hours, access to childcare subsidies, and/or have access to on-site childcare. In Colorado, the average cost of infant care at a licensed child care center is nearly \$15,000 per year, and more than \$11,000 per year for a four-year old.<sup>43</sup> Although not a substitute for childcare, for a single mother, this cost could be nearly 86 percent of her annual income.<sup>44</sup>

## State of Family Friendly Business Practices in Colorado

### Colorado’s Workforce

Between January 2007 and January 2017, Colorado’s labor force grew by more than 200,000 people.<sup>45</sup> Between 2015 and 2016, “Gen Xers” (defined as those individuals born between 1965 and 1981) comprised 41.9 percent of the workforce, while “Millennials” (defined as those individuals born between 1982 and about 2002) made-up nearly a fifth.<sup>46</sup> The average age of an employee in Colorado is 46.7 years; however the age of new hires in that same period was only 37 years of age.<sup>47</sup> As of June 2016, more than a third of the workforce is eligible to retire.<sup>48</sup> Finally, the Colorado State Demography office

<sup>38</sup> “Absenteeism: The Bottom-Line Killer”, *Circadian Information Limited Partnership*, Lexington, MA: 2005

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Emily Tanner-Smith and Adam Long, “The Stress-Health Connection and Its Implication for Employers”, *Managed Care Outlook* 21 (2008)

<sup>41</sup> 26 U.S. Code 45F, “Employer-Provided Child Care Credit,” 2014, <https://www.gpo.gov>

<sup>42</sup> Brian Prevatt, “Employer-Provided Child Care Tax Credit”, Hancock Askew & Co, LLP, 2017, <http://www.hancockaskew.com/employer-provided-child-care-tax-credit/>

<sup>43</sup> State Child Care Facts in the State of Colorado”, *ChildCare Aware of America*, 2016, <http://www.usa.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Colorado.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> “Economy at a Glance: Colorado”, Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 7, 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.co.htm>

<sup>46</sup> Taylor, Veitch, and Burgess, “FY 2015-16 Workforce Report”

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

estimates that between 2010 and 2020, some 233,000 people between the ages of 20 and 35 will move to Colorado. Taken together, these statistics indicate a trend in the state of a younger, growing workforce that may be attracted by family friendly business practices.

In 2016, there were more than 165,000 children in Colorado under age six who lived in two-parent families where both parents worked, and 85,000 children under age six lived in single-parent families where their parent worked.<sup>49</sup> In total, there were more than 250,000 children under the age of six potentially needing childcare,<sup>50</sup> demonstrating a potentially considerable number of employees who would benefit from family friendly business practices.

It is also known that between 2012 and 2015, annual per capita income in Colorado increased by 7.2 percent, while the average family income increased by 6.82 percent.<sup>51</sup> These numbers indicate that Colorado residents are becoming increasingly higher wage earners, as well. Studies have shown that individuals earning higher incomes tend to work longer hours and have greater family demands, especially in instances of dual earning households.<sup>52</sup> This suggests that Coloradans may be facing even more pronounced stress from their work and personal life responsibilities and that these stresses may increase as more employees with families begin earning higher wages.

### ***Family Friendly Business Practices in Colorado***

In Colorado, EPIC (Executives Partnering to Invest in Children), Colorado Essentials for Childhood, and Health Links have partnered to lead the conversation about family friendly business practices for employers. Recently, they published a “Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit” and the “Family-Friendly Workplace Assessment” to empower businesses to become more family friendly.<sup>53</sup> The workplace assessment acts as a business engagement tool, where organizations can receive family-friendly scores, make this available to the public, and have the option of receiving more resources and coaching. The goal of the initiative is to create healthy, vibrant businesses and a stronger local economy throughout Colorado that supports its workforce.

### **Colorado Spotlight: Family Friendly Companies**

These companies meet the Family Friendly Workplace Toolkit criteria of a Family Friendly Business, which are:

- *Flexible work hours*
- *Core benefits*
- *Paid leave*
- *Support services*
- *Career development*
- *Community involvement*

### **Boulder County**

In Colorado, Boulder County has led the way with the implementation of a variety of family-friendly work policies, such as offering 30 days of fully paid leave for new parents, providing breastfeeding friendly environments, and, most recently, establishing an “infants-at-work” policy for all Boulder

---

<sup>49</sup> “State Child Care Facts in the State of Colorado”, 2016

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> “Colorado Household Income”, Department of Numbers, 2016, <http://www.deptofnumbers.com/income/colorado/>

<sup>52</sup> “The Rise in Dual Income Households”, Pew Research Center, June 18, 2015, [http://www.pewresearch.org/ft\\_dual-income-households-1960-2012-2/](http://www.pewresearch.org/ft_dual-income-households-1960-2012-2/)

<sup>53</sup> David Shapiro and Giorgianna Venetis, “Supporting Family-Friendly Employers in Colorado,” Early Childhood Colorado Partnership, November 28, 2016, <http://eccp.civiccanopy.org/supporting-family-friendly-employers-colorado/>

County employees.<sup>54</sup> The “infants-at-work” policy allows county employees to bring their infants to work when returning from parental leave, until the child becomes mobile. The goal of the policy is to support parents and help them continue to bond with their child and, ultimately, help reduce postpartum depression. The policy also allows for easier breastfeeding, increases female labor force participation, increases staff retention and reduces turnover, and reduces reliance on public assistance.<sup>55</sup> Boulder County hopes to set an example for all employers in the County to encourage them to offer similar family friendly business practices. The County program, “The Raising of America Partnership in Boulder County”, works on engaging the Boulder community in supporting families and young children. Their focus is on helping businesses create supportive workplaces for young families, working to expand access to quality child care and preschool, and provide a place for families to share their concerns.<sup>56</sup>

### Children’s Hospital Colorado

Children’s Hospital Colorado is a non-profit hospital and healthcare network founded in 1908 dedicated to treating children.<sup>57</sup> Children’s Hospital Colorado employs over 7,000 pediatric specialists and administrative staff, and is expressly committed to a “family-centered culture” by offering an employee assistance program (EAP) and backup care benefits. The EAP is unique in its offering of employer-sponsored assessment, referral, focused therapy, and coaching for both employees and their families. The benefit is meant to help employees with a range of issues from financial needs, legal issues, and stress. The Backup Care program provides 24-hour temporary care services for children and elderly family members so employees do not have to take time away from work when issues arise with their normal care arrangements. The EAP and Backup Care are two of many employee benefits Children’s Hospital Colorado offers that promote a family friendly corporate culture. In addition to these benefits, the Children’s Hospital Colorado also offers telecommuting positions to recruit and retain top talent.<sup>58</sup>

### DaVita, Inc.

DaVita Inc., which employs over 70,000 people nationwide, provides dialysis services and kidney care. Their strong team-based corporate culture is supported by a variety of flexible work opportunities, including flexible schedules and telecommuting.<sup>59</sup> In addition, they offer employees stress-counseling and provide financial support to employees in need through the Davita Village Network (DVN), which is funded through employee and management contributions. Looking forward, DaVita Inc. plans on implementing paid caregiver leave benefits and expanded time-off for parental leave, further exemplifying their commitment to offering family friendly benefits.<sup>60</sup>

### Pinnacol Assurance

Pinnacol Assurance is a Denver based company that provides worker’s compensation insurance to Colorado companies, supporting over 100 Colorado businesses.<sup>61</sup> Pinnacol offers employees a paid time off bank, which pools all available time-off for each worker. Instead of separating accrued hours for vacation or sick leave, employees have flexible work schedules and are encouraged to use paid leave to

<sup>54</sup> “Parental Pay Policy”, Executives Partnering to Invest in Children, September 9, 2016, <http://eccp.civiccanopy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/9-13-Handout.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> “Boulder County further supports families by implementing ‘Infants-at-Work’ policy”, Boulder County, September 1, 2016, <http://eccp.civiccanopy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/9-13-Handout.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> “The Raising of America Partnership in Boulder County”, Boulder County, 2017, <https://www.bouldercounty.org/departments/public-health/raising-of-america-boulder-county/>

<sup>57</sup> “Welcome to Children’s Hospital Colorado,” Children’s Hospital Colorado, <https://www.childrenscolorado.org/about/>

<sup>58</sup> “Benefits,” Children’s Hospital Colorado, <https://www.childrenscolorado.org/about/careers/working-at-childrens/benefits/>

<sup>59</sup> “DaVita Jobs with Part-Time, Telecommuting, or Flexible Work,” Flex Jobs, <https://www.flexjobs.com/jobs/telecommuting-jobs-at-davita>

<sup>60</sup> “Community Care: The DaVita Vision for Global Citizenship 2016,” DaVita, 2016, <https://davita.app.box.com/s/8xu5h76b9lu0pcuwmkscwla3rwno3hjp>

<sup>61</sup> “Who We Are,” Pinnacol Assurance, <https://www.pinnacol.com/who-we-are>

help achieve more work-life balance. Pinnacol also offers flexible spending accounts that can be used for dependent care for children or elderly relative expenses through pre-tax employee contributions. Their disability coverage and life insurance policies work to reduce the stress caused by an extended illness or disability by paying up to 70 percent of an employee's salary until they are 65 years old, should their illness or disability last longer than 90 days. Pinnacol Assurance is known as a top Colorado company to work for because of its dedication to keeping a healthy and happy workforce.<sup>62</sup>

## USAA

USAA provides banking and other financial services, in addition to insurance, to its military and family members.<sup>63</sup> USAA promotes a corporate culture of health that includes wellness programs, as well as policies to improve employees' work-life balance. Nationally, they have implemented telecommuting and flexible schedule policies that have decreased turnover by half and even boosted the company's net worth.<sup>64</sup> Their newly remodeled Colorado Springs campus furthers their commitment to the "physical, financial, and emotional wellness" of their employees and offers onsite childcare.<sup>65</sup> Because of their commitment to family friendly business practices, USAA has also been ranked among the top 100 companies to work for by Forbes, Inc., and has been recognized locally as one of Colorado's top companies.<sup>66</sup> USAA is an excellent example of the mutual benefit companies get from investing in the health and wellness of their workers.

## Additional Examples of Family Friendly Business Practices

### *New Mexico Task Force on Work Life Balance*

The Family Friendly Business Award, formed by the New Mexico Task Force on Work-Life Balance, is an innovative state-based program that promotes the adoption of family friendly business practices by local New Mexican businesses.<sup>67</sup> The original concept came from recommendations from the Task Force, which was created under the University of New Mexico for the Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER), and funded by New Mexico Senate Bill 272 in 2012. The Task Force brings together key government and business stakeholders throughout New Mexico to develop policy recommendations on how to best encourage businesses to adopt family-friendly business practices.<sup>68,69</sup> Candidates are evaluated on four family friendly policy areas: paid leave, health support, work schedules, and economic support. The award is differentiated into three tiers that reflect how candidate companies have implemented the four policy areas. The gold award reflects a company that has met at least one policy criteria within each of the four policy areas; the silver award reflects a company that has met criteria in at least three of the four policy areas; and the bronze award reflects a company that has met no more than two criteria in the four policy areas and is engaging with educational material to demonstrate a commitment to growing its family friendly business policy offerings.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>62</sup> "Benefits," Pinnacol Assurance, <https://www.pinnacol.com/benefits>

<sup>63</sup> "Corporate Overview," USAA, [https://www.usaa.com/inet/wc/about\\_usaa\\_corporate\\_overview\\_main](https://www.usaa.com/inet/wc/about_usaa_corporate_overview_main)

<sup>64</sup> "Family-Friendly Workplaces," New Hampshire Women's Foundation Issue Brief, 2016, <http://nhwomensfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Family-Leave-Resource-Guide.pdf>

<sup>65</sup> Helen Robinson, "USAA Focuses on Healthy Options for Workers," *The Colorado Springs Business Journal*, September 27, 2016, <http://www.csbj.com/2016/09/27/usaa-focuses-healthy-options-workers/>

<sup>66</sup> Lisa Greim, "Top Large Workplace 2017: USAA Gets High Marks for its Mission to Aid Customers and Employees," *The Denver Post*, April 7, 2017, <http://www.denverpost.com/2017/04/07/top-workplaces-2017-usaa-large-employer/>

<sup>67</sup> "Learn More," Family Friendly New Mexico, <http://www.nmfamilyfriendlybusiness.com/learn-more/>

<sup>68</sup> "Support for the Task Force on Work Life Balance," Collective Action Strategies, February 2, 2012, <http://www.collectiveactionstrategies.com/archives/579>

<sup>69</sup> "Interim Report," Task Force on Work-Life Balance, October 2011, [http://bber.unm.edu/media/presentations/Work\\_Life\\_Balance\\_Pres\\_10.3.11.pdf](http://bber.unm.edu/media/presentations/Work_Life_Balance_Pres_10.3.11.pdf)

<sup>70</sup> "Learn More," Family Friendly New Mexico, <http://www.nmfamilyfriendlybusiness.com/learn-more/>

As of 2017, Family Friendly New Mexico has awarded over 70 gold medal awards, showing an increasing trend in business participation since its inception in 2015.<sup>71</sup> In addition, award recipients are not granted any monetary compensation for their achievement, but are instead allowed to utilize their certificate of recognition and Family Friendly Business Award Seal in their business and promotional materials.<sup>72</sup> The growing participation in the award program suggests that local business find value in achieving award status and are increasingly implementing and committing to family friendly business practices. By convening a Task Force that carefully included major stakeholders to create actionable policy recommendations, New Mexico has successfully work at the state level to better encourage and promote the adoption of family friendly business practices.

### **American Express: Teleworking and Flexible Schedules**

According to a 2017 Indeed Report, reviewed by Forbes, Inc., American Express is one of the top 10 companies committed to ensuring a work-life balance for their employees.<sup>73</sup> Currently, the company offers flexible work arrangements and telecommuting options to maintain a happy and healthy workforce, as well as attracts top talent by allowing employees to make time for what they find important.<sup>74</sup> American Express is continually cited as one of the most “flexible” companies to work for, offering reportedly half of their employees the option of working at home.<sup>75</sup> Their philosophy and commitment to these policies was previously substantiated through their own “American Express LifeTwist Study.” The study was a national survey researching how Americans define success. Results showed a shift away from monetary gains as the primary metric for success in favor of work-life balance and defines success as “the ability to take care of yourself and your life”.<sup>76</sup> Although a large, global company, the success of American Express’ family friendly business policies and their overall continued success as a company further demonstrate the benefit of employee centric policies while providing an excellent example of how these policies can be successfully implemented.

### **Patagonia: Employer-Sponsored Child Care**

Patagonia, known for their outdoor gear and clothing store, offers on-site day care and after-school programs at their headquarters in Ventura, California. Patagonia is among the only three percent of companies in the U.S. that offered unsubsidized day care services in 2016. Its program, started in 1983, is offered to all children up to age eight of the approximately 550 employees who work at the headquarters. Over the past 30 years, the program has expanded to employees in Reno, Nevada, who work at the Patagonia warehouse.<sup>77</sup> According to Patagonia, the company has high returns on employee retention, with 24 percent less turnover from employees who use the on-site center, and employee engagement, and 100 percent of moms returning to work after maternity leave.<sup>78</sup> The center in Ventura costs approximately \$1 million a year, after parent dues and tax deductions, which covers the costs of hiring of childcare staff,

<sup>71</sup> “Award Recipients,” Family Friendly New Mexico, <http://www.nmfamilfriendlybusiness.com/award-recipients/>

<sup>72</sup> “Learn More,” Family Friendly New Mexico, <http://www.nmfamilfriendlybusiness.com/learn-more/>

<sup>73</sup> Karsten Strauss, “Great Companies for Work-Life Balance,” *Forbes*, April 21, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/karstenstrauss/2017/04/21/great-companies-for-work-life-balance/#4636485f2327>

<sup>74</sup> Jennifer Parris, “Q&A: American Express on Work Life Balance,” *FlexJobs*, June 28, 2013, <https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/qa-american-express-on-work-life-balance/>

<sup>75</sup> Tanza Loudenback, Emmie Martin, and Alexa Pipia, “13 of the Happiest Companies in America,” *Business Insider*, April 29, 2016, <http://www.businessinsider.com/payscale-best-companies-with-happiest-employees-in-america-2016-4/#13-3m-1>

<sup>76</sup> “New Study: Americans Say Road to Success Now Paved More with Fulfillment than Wealth,” American Express News Press Release, May 15, 2013, <http://about.americanexpress.com/news/pr/2013/americans-say-road-to-success-fulfillment.aspx>

<sup>77</sup> Tessa Byars, “Patagonia Releases New Book, ‘Family Business: Innovative On-Site Child Care since 1983’,” *Patagonia Works*, August 9, 2016, <http://www.patagoniaworks.com/press/2016/8/8/patagonia-releases-new-book-family-business-innovative-on-site-child-care-since-1983>

<sup>78</sup> Rebecca Greenfield, “Why Are Companies Abandoning On-Site Day Care?,” *Bloomberg*, September 6, 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-09-06/why-are-companies-abandoning-on-site-day-care>

building and operating the center, and ensuring state rules and regulations are followed. Nevertheless, Patagonia believes it recoups 91 percent of its costs through the benefits it offers to its employees.<sup>79</sup>

While there are numerous examples of companies offering on-site or near-site child care, Patagonia’s program is a prime example for other businesses on how an onsite childcare center can be offered that benefits both the company and its employees, due to its longstanding nature and how-to manual.

## Conclusion

Family friendly business practices, specifically flexible schedules, telecommuting, and employer-sponsored childcare, are all strategies that have been proven to reduce employees’ stress by giving them greater autonomy to create the work-life balance that best fits their work and personal needs. As demonstrated by the case studies above, there are many ways that businesses can begin to adopt these policies. In the case of Boulder County and New Mexico, government led efforts to encourage businesses to offer these benefits can be successfully done through the creation of a system of recognition and through “leading by example”.<sup>80,81</sup> Programs implemented by larger, national companies such as USAA, American Express, and Patagonia demonstrate how commitment to family friendly policies can help businesses retain and recruit talent, as well as show that implementation and utilization of such policies does not jeopardize the overall success of the business.<sup>82,83</sup>

Family friendly business practices improve overall employee wellbeing and mitigate negative stress-related health effects by allowing for greater time spent with social groups, family, and away from the working environment and its responsibilities.<sup>84</sup> As the Colorado workforce continues to expand, pressures placed on communities will grow, making it more likely that those in the workforce will experience even longer and more intense periods of work-related stress.<sup>85</sup> Given the link between negative physical and mental health impacts, substance abuse, and violence, and sustained stress, encouraging businesses to adopt family friendly business policies is an important step to ensuring the continued health and wellbeing of the Colorado working population.

---

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> “Parental Pay Policy”, Executives Partnering to Invest in Children, September 9, 2016, <http://eccp.civiccanopy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/9-13-Handout.pdf>

<sup>81</sup> “Learn More,” Family Friendly New Mexico, <http://www.nmfamilfriendlybusiness.com/learn-more/>

<sup>82</sup> J. Parris, “Q&A: American Express on Work Life Balance,” 2013

<sup>83</sup> Byars, “Patagonia Releases New Book”, 2016

<sup>84</sup> Briana Rognlin, “Friends, Family are the Biggest Influences on our Health: Study,” *Huffington Post*, December 7, 2011, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/07/friends-family-health-influence\\_n\\_1000829.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/07/friends-family-health-influence_n_1000829.html)

<sup>85</sup> Taylor, Veitch, and Burgess, “FY 2015-16 Workforce Report”, 2016