

PEOPLE & HR LIVE CONFERENCE RECAP

Comprehensive Workplace Wellness: Stopping Burnout Before It Starts

BY JESSICA SWENSON | JULY 09, 2026

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Employee burnout can quietly erode engagement, productivity, and performance, especially in high-pressure fields such as investment banking, says Stephanie Chiodi, head of benefits at [Moelis & Company](#). That's the reason her organization monitors utilization of PTO and protected weekends—to make sure they're being used. The company also invests heavily in targeted manager training, ensuring that deal teams and staff have the tools they need to build resilience and excel in their roles.

Chiodi and a panel of cross-industry leaders discussed tools and benefits that help manage everyday stressors and avoid employee burnout at [From Day One's Manhattan conference](#). The session was moderated by HR Brew senior reporter Courtney Vinopal.

Employers across industries are finding ways to detect burnout warning signs. Serina Pak, SVP of talent and total rewards for [Danone](#), works with her team to use pulse checks, employee resource group insights, and biannual healthcare utilization reviews to understand the mindset of the broader employee population.

"What we emphasize is really identifying early warning signs, and we do that by being very connected with our employees, doing pulse checks, and we also believe that a lot of this is about culture," said Pak. The company focuses on connection and fosters a leader-led culture that empowers employees through a shared accountability model.

Modern Workplace Wellness

"Ten years ago, walking challenges were what we did for wellness," said Nicole Wolfe, VP of B2B partnerships at [Rula Health](#). "What an incredible evolution to what we consider wellness now."

Wolfe is seeing companies shift from a check-the-box mentality with regard to mental health to making wellness a foundational part of their employee programs. She identified three main pillars that many employees and employers are prioritizing: timely access to care, with no long lead times; authentic provider connections; and reasonable costs enabled by in-network care.

Danone has a layered benefits ecosystem, says Pak, which evaluates every benefit against four pillars: physical, nutritional, mental, and financial health. This influences the company's decisions not only around medical coverage but also flexible time off, fertility support, childcare leave, and more, to support thousands of employees. "We think about how we support every employee's mental wellness."





Panelists spoke about "Workplace Wellness When Employees Feel They're at the Breaking Point" at the Manhattan conference

Panelists also addressed how AI is entering the wellness equation. Sword Health's AI-assisted care model offers employees 24/7 access to care, enabling care on their timeline while preserving PTO hours for rest and rejuvenation, says Kinsay Conner, doctor of physical therapy and clinical specialist with [Sword Health](#).

But AI shouldn't be working on its own. All of the company's solutions "pair members with a clinician, whether that's a PhD psychologist or a doctor of physical therapy. The clinicians are providing 100% of the clinical oversight," said Conner. "The AI is there for support."

Mental Health Support When It Matters

Chiodi uncovered a critical access gap at Moelis early in her tenure. Despite having very robust medical plans, employees often ran into 3-4-month wait times for mental health care in the UK and multi-week waits in the United States. Moelis found an organization to partner with that could connect employees with care within one business day, and eliminated barriers to care by completely covering that benefit for employees.

"We made a decision as a firm to cover the benefit at 100% so that we were removing really any barrier that someone could come up with to access their own self-guided elements," she said, "or to graduate into care [with a coach, psychiatrist, or psychologist]."

Panelists agreed that the opportunity for genuine disconnection from work is critical to mental wellness, but methods vary between organizations. Wolfe noted a trending practice of normalizing mental healthcare by allowing team members to block out calendar time for therapy appointments.

The ROI of Workplace Wellness

Measuring ROI on these comprehensive benefit programs is "an art and a science" said Pak. Danone analyzes not only employee survey data and benefit utilization statistics, but also turnover, leave of absence, and engagement scores to determine the company's best path forward.

Wolfe cautions that utilization alone is not enough—it needs to lead to results. "There's a balance of ensuring that you can provide care regardless of where people are and what they need, but also they are utilizing it in a way that you can see results," she said. "Engagement is important, but it's also ensuring that the right people are using the right benefits at the right time."

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