



Working It Out

How the private benefits sector can support people with psoriatic disease in the workplace

Chronic Disease at Work Conference | Benefits Canada | February 9, 2022



Psoriasis 101

PSORIASIS IS an immune system disorder where skin regenerates every 3-4 days instead of 28-30 days, causing build up of skin (plaques), itch, pain, redness & inflammation

PSORIASIS IS NOT

- Just a rash
- Contagious
- Easy to live with

Onset between 15 & 25 but can happen at any age

Second smaller incidence peak between 50 & 60

Even when well-controlled, psoriasis can flare (episodic)

Psoriasis affects men & women equally

Psoriasis is estimated to impact upwards of 1 million people in Canada.

1 in 3 people living with psoriasis will develop psoriatic arthritis.

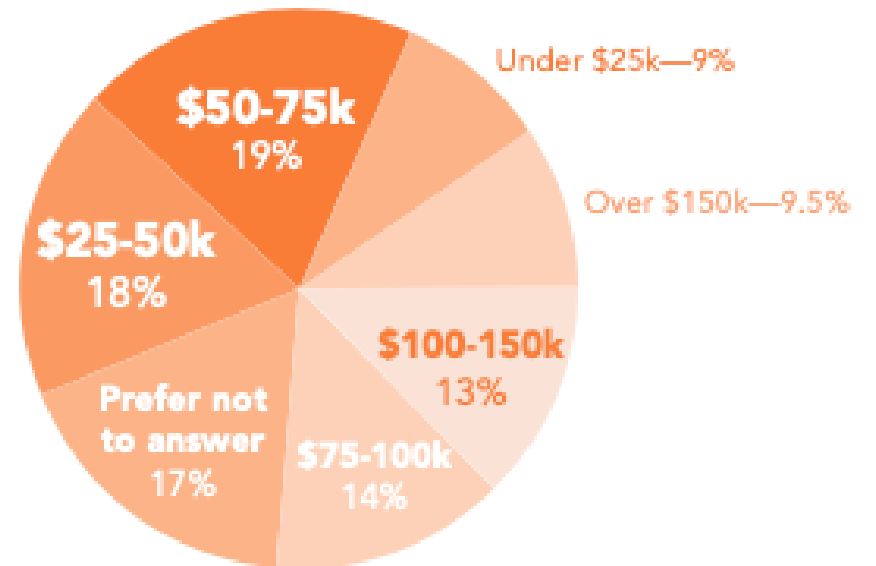
Inflammation underlying psoriatic disease affects:

- Skin (psoriasis)
- Joints (psoriatic arthritis)
- Cardiovascular system
- Metabolic system
- Mental health

People with psoriatic disease in the workplace



Household income



Living with psoriatic disease in the workplace

Impacts on job tasks

Over 50% of survey participants said that psoriasis and PsA had a negative impact at work. When it comes to performing job tasks, they identified with these challenges:



They had difficulty performing physical tasks such as standing for long periods of time



Concentration was affected by itching



The location of psoriasis plaques affected them at work



They had difficulty reporting to work or staying focused due to pain, stress, or fatigue



They felt self-conscious in a way that impacted their performance at work



They felt worried to a degree it had an impact on their job performance

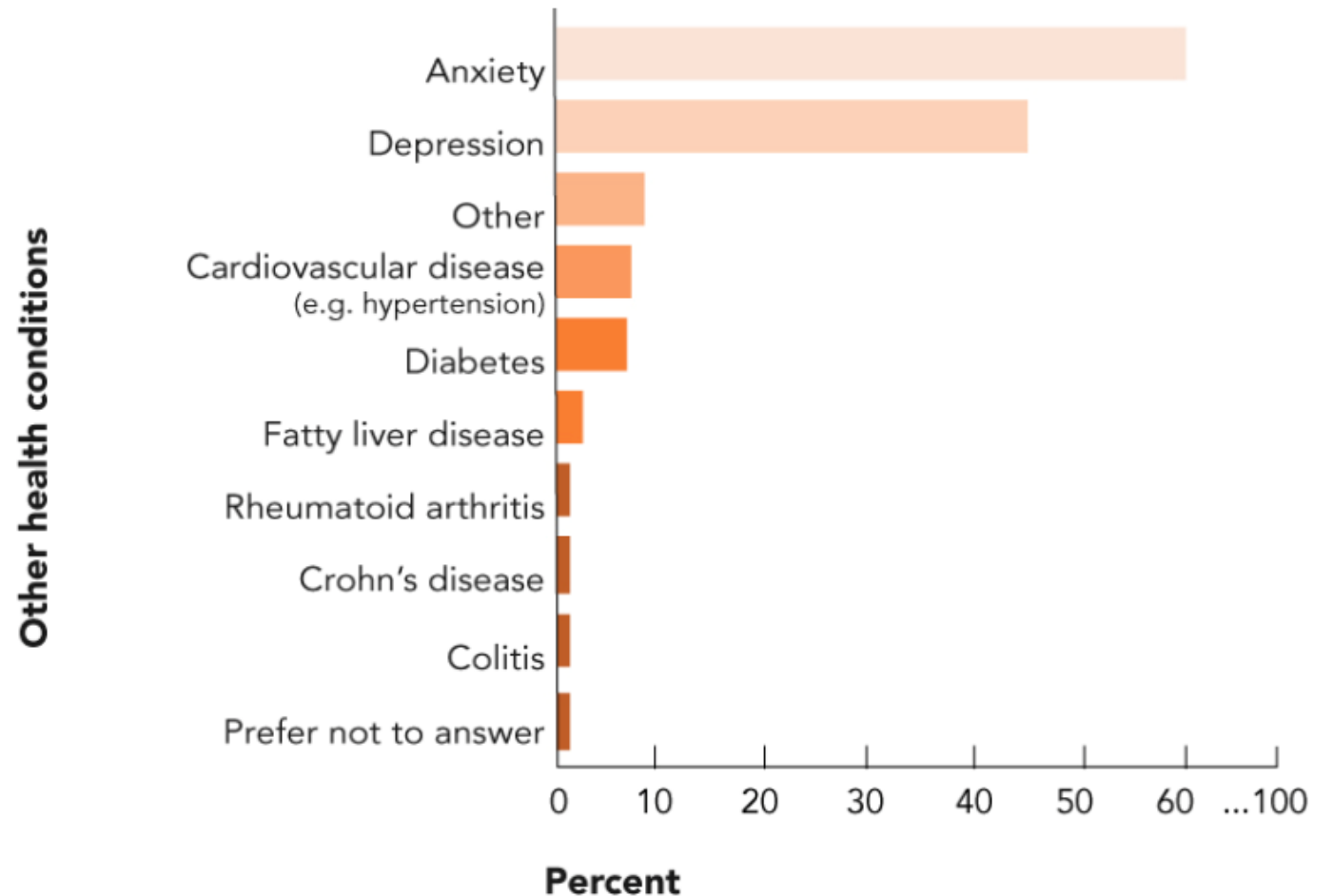


They were worried about how psoriasis and/or PsA will affect their ability to stay employed

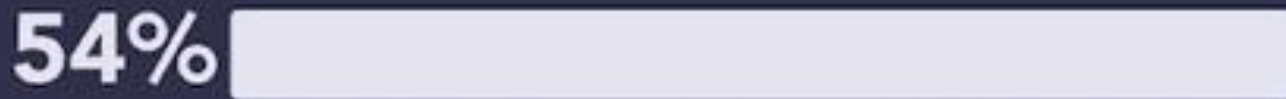
Private health benefits are important

It can take a lot of effort to get well – or stay well – with psoriatic disease.

Private health benefits offer **important tools to maintain health** for people with psoriatic disease.



How people with psoriatic disease are paying for medications and other health services



I am reimbursed through my employer's benefits plan.



I pay for medications and other health care services myself.



I am reimbursed through a public drug plan.



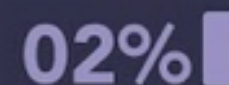
I am reimbursed through my spouse/common-law partner's benefits plan.



I am reimbursed through a compassionate care plan offered by a pharmaceutical company.




I am reimbursed through a plan provided by a union or other association.





I prefer not to answer.


Difficulties getting medications reimbursed through private or public plans


37% 
The benefit plan only reimbursed some prescribed medications or treatments.

37% 
I have not had any difficulties in accessing medications or treatments.

29% 
The benefit plan limits the amount of money that can be reimbursed towards a drug or service.

12% 
It is difficult to navigate administrative processes including what is reimbursed, prior authorization, etc.

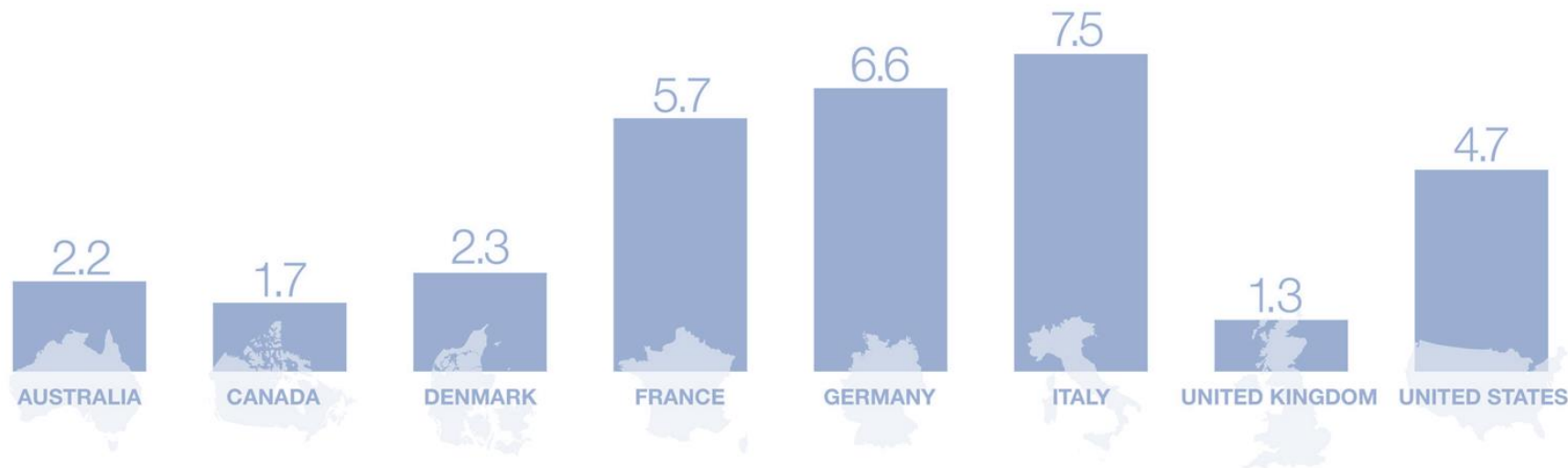
09% 
The benefits plan had a minimum waiting period before medications or treatments were reimbursed, e.g., 3 months before health claims

03% 
I prefer not to answer.

Improving care for people with psoriatic disease

- **Access to dermatologists** is abysmal in Canada
 - Improve access to specialty care by covering access to local dermatology expertise

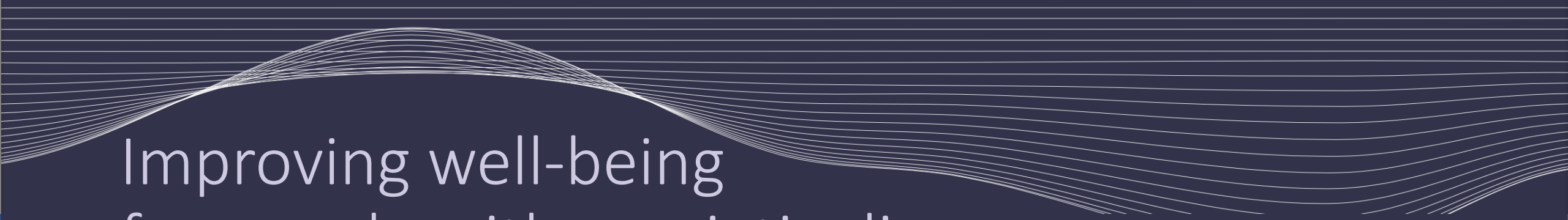
Number of dermatologists per 100,000 people





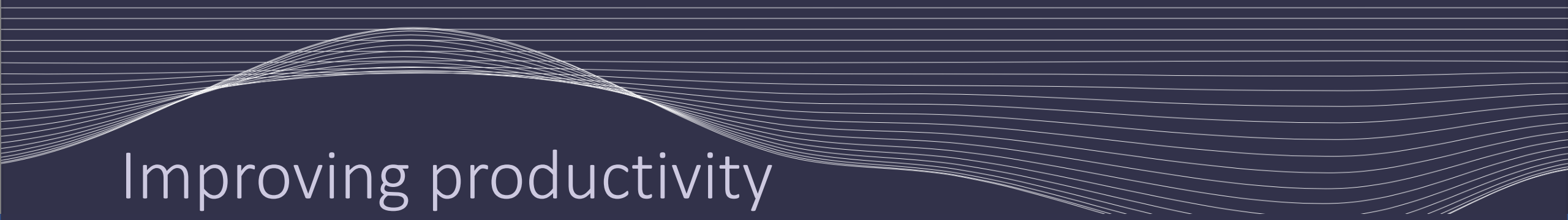
Improving care for people with psoriatic disease

- **Virtual care** increasingly common but not always covered, resulting in payments out of pocket
 - Ensure that people living with psoriatic disease can use validated virtual care as an option along with in-person care
- **Pain** is a common experience and not always well-controlled
 - Include specialized pain management programs as part of the plan design (for example, mindfulness, fitness incentive, etc.)



Improving well-being for people with psoriatic disease

- Living with a **chronic & episodic disease** is hard, exhausting, and requires new skills
 - Living well with a chronic disease programs using validated methodologies (e.g., acceptance and commitment therapy)
 - Expand access to EAP for people living with chronic or episodic diseases
 - Increase access to social worker & psychologist (paramedical) services
 - Connect plan members to available resources through patient organizations



Improving productivity for people with psoriatic disease

- When psoriatic disease is **well-controlled**, people can be more productive
 - Provide multiple treatment options for psoriatic disease that recognize that different patients have different needs
 - Ensure that patients can transition between products that require special authorization to manage a flare, when they are planning a family, etc.
 - Expand coverage to include home phototherapy units
 - Ensure plans are flexible to support additional services and needs during a flare
- Access to **accommodations in the workplace** is essential for some people
 - Support plan sponsors to understand how to accommodate employees with psoriatic disease in the workplace to reduce progression to disability

Resources

