Key Facts: the Perspective of Women

The Council for Disability Awareness surveyed over 2,200 working Americans to understand in greater depth their financial preparedness for periods of disability that caused them to leave work. The results indicated half of survey participants carried disability insurance with single men and women less likely to be insured.

Further analysis found 75% of men who had disability coverage believed they were adequately insured while only 57% of women felt the same way.

Of greatest concern was the nearly 10 million single, working females who said they were “extremely unprepared” financially for work absences. This group was almost three times as vulnerable to income loss as men (11%) and less secure than married women – 20% of whom reported extreme unpreparedness.

In an ongoing 3-year study by The CDA of individual, short- and long-term disability insurance claims (to be released later this year), women experienced a higher overall incidence of disability claims.

Without some form of income protection, single women can expect to experience greater rates of financial difficulty if they need to miss work due to illness, injury or pregnancy. Women surveyed reported lower individual salaries, lower financial security, described their debt as a bigger problem, and reported lower preparedness for all types of financial emergencies than men.

Risk for Women

• 52% of single, female workers have no disability insurance.

• 1 in 4 women reported they are “extremely unprepared” for a period of disability lasting 3 months. They were also less likely than men to agree there is a risk they could experience an income loss in their working years, that they have already planned for an income loss, or that they know about ways to protect themselves from loss of income.

• Despite this, among those who do not have disability coverage, women were more likely than men to say they don’t have it because they’ve never thought about it.

• Among those women who reported they have enough disability insurance, 23 percent said they do not know how much they should have, and women reported a lower understanding of disability insurance than men; an area of opportunity for education on the topic.
10 Million Single, Female Workers at Extreme Financial Risk From a Disability

Disability Risk in America

Millions of working Americans are facing a growing crisis: a lack of adequate disability insurance coverage. Today, the absence of emergency savings, rising medical costs, and an overall trend of fewer employers offering benefits to workers have created a critical blind spot for many American workers and their families. Without some kind of income protection, more Americans are experiencing severe financial difficulty if they need to miss work due to illness, injury or pregnancy.

2019 Critical Facts

- **More than one in four of today’s 20-year-olds** can expect to be out of work for at least a year because of a disabling condition before they reach the normal retirement age.¹
- **At least 51 million working adults** in the United States are without disability insurance other than the basic coverage available through Social Security.²
- **Only 40 percent of US households** have at least $6,275 in liquid savings. That is what it would take a family of four to replace income at the poverty level for three months.³
- **Four out of ten American adults** indicate they can’t pay an unexpected $400 bill without having to carry a balance on their credit card or borrow money from friends, family, or the bank.⁴

ACLI found that 54.3% of non-retired households (51.3 million in total) did not report having disability insurance. Assuming there is at least one adult in each household, this means the number of "uncovered" adults is at least equal to the number of "uncovered" households.

Media Inquiries: Joey Terry, CD&M Communications • jterry@cdmc.com • 207-347-3300, ext. 29