

Introduction

Boards and the executive suite have been tasked with addressing an array of both health and economic challenges the last few years. The talent shortage has been impacting all levels of the organization including these top-level jobs. Over a quarter of health insurers (27%) experienced higher turnover levels for executives in 2022. This impacts both the need for talent and overall costs; compensation and benefits are often the single largest expense item for health insurers. To better understand how companies are addressing these issues, BDO conducted in-depth analysis of compensation and turnover using our proprietary survey data. Some of the key findings that we explore in this insights report include:

- An increase in pay levels for executives that has outpaced revenue growth.
- ► Further assessment and re-tooling of executive compensation plans, including Supplemental Executive Retirement Plans (SERPs) and Change of Control (CoC) agreements, to attract and retain critical top talent.
- ▶ Refining the metrics used for annual and long-term incentive plans.
- Evaluation of the senior management team composition and the impact of executive turnover on bench strength.

This report is based on data collected by BDO's recently published <u>2022</u>

<u>BDO Health Insurance Industry Executive & Management Total Potential</u>

<u>Remuneration (TPR) Survey</u> which is a valuable source of executive compensation information relied upon by boards and management to support well-informed executive compensation decisions.

BDO's TPR Survey includes insights related to compensation and performance measures that enable health insurers to focus on executive compensation strategies that drive desired business results. The full survey results report contains in-depth data and analysis that allows health insurance companies to address critical issues, including:

- Designing pay programs and delivery mechanisms to attract and retain an executive leadership team that will drive the business strategy.
- Ensuring performance metrics support the behaviors that will achieve the goals of the business.
- Determining how much of an executive's pay should be at risk (i.e., variable pay that is only earned if specific performance metrics are achieved).
- Effectively designing Supplemental Executive Retirement Plans (SERPs) and Change of Control (CoC)
 agreements.



Top Executive Pay Increases Outpace Growth in Revenue

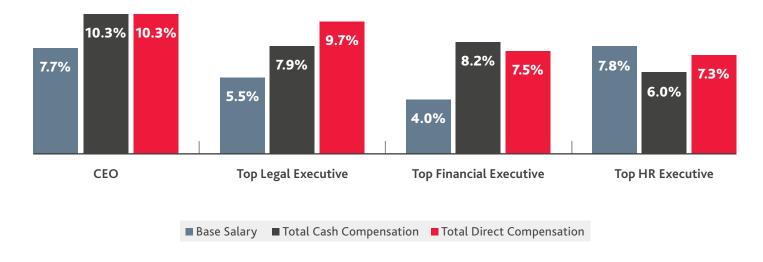
On average, the change in base salary for incumbent Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) increased 7.7% year over year, higher than the 6.6% average increase in total revenue² for the surveyed companies. Actual total cash compensation (TCC)³ and total direct compensation (TDC)⁴ increased by 10.3%.

For other top executive positions, TCC and TDC increased at a rate close to or higher than the increase in total revenues. This was likely related to the extraordinary consumer price index, topping out at just over 9% in June 2022.⁵

Change in executive pay from 2021 to 2022 is assessed in two ways:—

- ▶ Exhibit One: Change in pay for **current incumbents** which includes the average increase or decrease in pay that was experienced by each individual executive. This analysis is based on companies with the **same incumbent** for the two years.
- ▶ <u>Exhibit Two</u>: Change in pay based on year-over-year change for a **position**. This compares company by company including those companies where the incumbent changed.

EXHIBIT 1: AVERAGE CHANGE IN ACTUAL PAY FROM 2021-2022 - SAME INCUMBENTS⁶



^{2 2021} and 2022 TPR Survey editions.

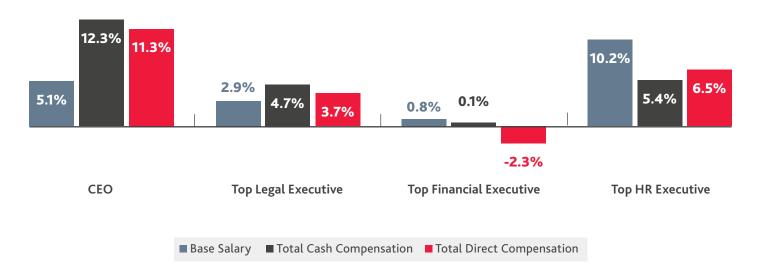
³ Base salary plus annual incentives.

⁴ Base salary plus annual and long-term incentives.

⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

⁶ Based on companies matching the same incumbent to the job in both the 2021 and 2022 TPR Survey editions.

EXHIBIT 2: AVERAGE CHANGE IN ACTUAL PAY FROM 2021-2022 – ALL INCUMBENTS⁷



Overall, the change in pay for all incumbents shows that the new hires were often brought in at a lower pay level than their predecessor. Our analysis revealed that, on average, 20% of these top executives were newly hired, and base salary was lower for 40% of those newly hired incumbents.

Year-over-year changes in pay are more erratic when including new hires. Contributing factors include comparison of a full-year bonus to a partial-year bonus paid to new hires in their first year. This is also true of TDC which typically fluctuates more from year to year.

In addition to absolute compensation levels, it is interesting to consider compensation in the context of revenues. Executive pay levels typically increase in concert with company size and can be influenced by organization type (see exhibit 3). For instance, the average salary for CEOs in companies with revenues greater than or equal to \$4 billion is about 20% higher than the average salary for CEOs at companies with revenues of less than \$4 billion. However, this does not necessarily mean that larger companies overpay their CEO. We compared pay levels relative to revenues and found that larger-sized companies were able to achieve a greater return (revenue) on their investment (CEO pay). For additional context, the exhibit also shows revenue per dollar of CEO pay for public companies. While these companies are significantly larger and their pay is higher (due to their size and equity grants), their return on CEO pay investment is the highest.

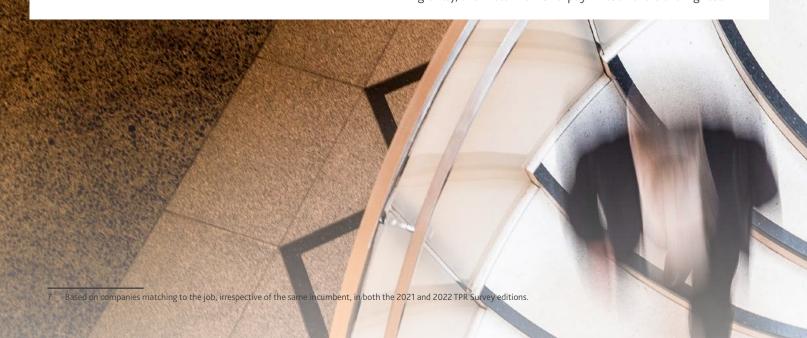
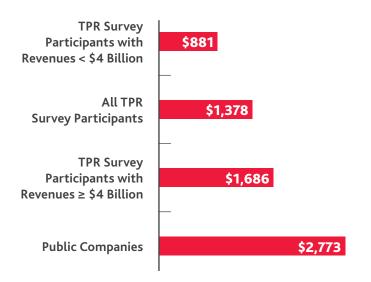


EXHIBIT 3: AVERAGE REVENUE PER DOLLAR OF CEO TOTAL DIRECT COMPENSATION (IN THOUSANDS)8



BDO's Take

Some of the nation's largest health insurers have recently experienced higher profits and revenues due in part to increasing membership bases but also rising healthcare costs. With the current volatile economy and evolving medical needs of our population, it is difficult to predict what next year will bring with respect to healthcare costs and demand. Health insurers are front and center in some of the biggest challenges facing society and need to stay out in front to retain their top-tier teams.

The role of organizational leaders is to ensure that the company fulfills its mission and provides value to its stakeholders, including policy holders, providers, investors and the community. Executives bring to the table a wealth of experience and insight. "In the ideal situation, compensation programs reinforce the strategic goals of the organization and reward executives for their success. However, it is important to avoid 'unintended consequence' whereby the compensation program clouds judgement or misdirects actions," says Judy Canavan, Managing Director in BDO's Global Employer Services practice. While this can be a result of plan design, it is just as likely a result of changing circumstances or misalignment of performance incentives when measured against meeting the company's operational ROI or profit margin benchmarks. The fast pace of change to the economy and markets requires monitoring, communication and flexibility.

Utilizing Executive Incentive Compensation to Drive Corporate Results

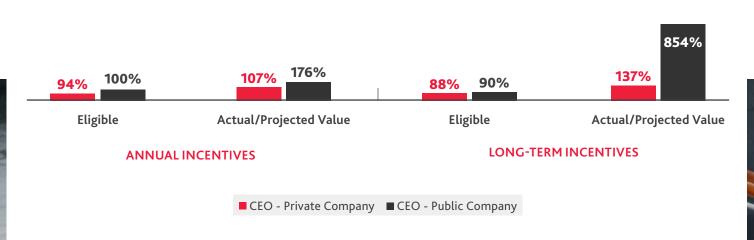
Executive compensation plans are constantly being evaluated in order to attract and retain high performing talent that possess the right competencies and are empowered to lead the organization. An executive compensation package will typically include financial and non-financial incentive components to drive both individual and organizational performance.

VARIABLE PAY IS A KEY ELEMENT OF HEALTH INSURANCE EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Incentive compensation, including both annual or short-term incentives (STI) and equity plans or long-term incentives (LTI), is generally considered and used as an effective means of aligning the financial interests of top executives to that of the company and other stakeholders. However, the process of determining what metrics to use and how to set results-oriented goals is a constant challenge. The degree to which incentives are used will vary by organization type — private versus public companies (see Exhibit 4).

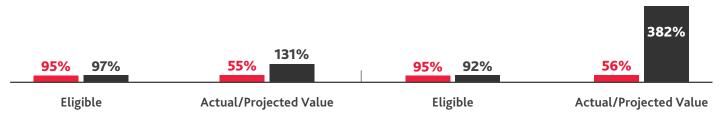
- ► Annual and long-term incentive eligibility for CEOs is comparable between private and public companies.
- Annual incentive awards for CEOs are higher at public companies.
- On average, long-term incentive awards for CEOs are significantly higher at public companies; however, it is important to consider the scenario where projected award value may be much more than actual award value, as is often occurring in today's market.

EXHIBIT 4: COMPARISON OF CEO ANNUAL AND LONG-TERM INCENTIVES BY ORGANIZATION TYPE9



These observations are consistent with the use of annual and long-term incentives, as well as the award amounts, for direct reports to the CEO (see Exhibit 5).

EXHIBIT 5: COMPARISON OF ANNUAL AND LONG-TERM INCENTIVES FOR DIRECT REPORTS TO THE CEO BY ORGANIZATION TYPE¹⁰



ANNUAL INCENTIVES

LONG-TERM INCENTIVES

■ Direct Report - Private Company ■ Direct Report - Public Company



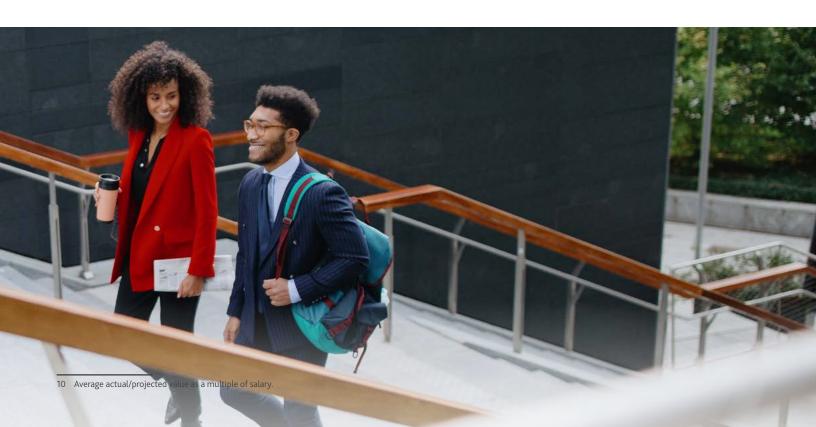
Public companies use equity compensation to align the executive's focus with the interests of the shareholders, however, if the market goes down, these vehicles may lose a significant amount of value irrespective of executive performance.





JUDY CANAVAN

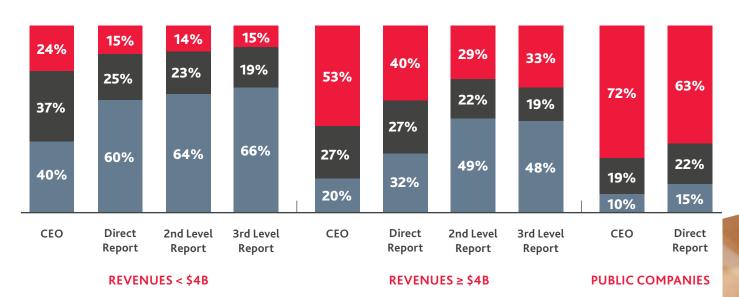
Managing Director, Global Employer Services



Variable pay for health insurance executives continues to be prominent in terms of usage and the level of incentive opportunity. In fact, the 2022 TPR Survey results showed that all but one company reported having a variable pay plan.

There is more pay at risk for executives of public companies, as illustrated below (see Exhibit 6). This is in large part driven by long-term incentives (including equity), which represent the largest component of executive pay in public organizations. For private companies, there is more pay at risk for those with \$4 billion or more in revenues relative to those who are less than \$4 billion in revenues. The significant difference in LTI levels puts public companies in a league of their own for CEOs and direct reports to the CEO.

EXHIBIT 6: AVERAGE ACTUAL MIX OF PAY FOR ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTING LEVELS BY REVENUE SIZE¹¹







SELECTING METRICS TO ALIGN EXECUTIVE INCENTIVE PAY TO CORPORATE RESULTS

Our survey identified the metrics that companies most often use in the design of annual and long-term incentive plans for health insurance executives (see Exhibit 7). Topping the leaderboard for annual incentive metrics are customer satisfaction and contract/subscriber/member growth — which is an excellent indicator of true organic growth. Organizations are balancing this with an eye toward other financials in their long-term plan such as net income/profit growth. This will challenge executives as business expenses are rising rapidly due to inflation pressures as well as higher wage prices driven by more demand for health-related resources than current supply. This will put pressure on profits. The table below shows the prevalence of measures used for the annual and long-term incentive plans.

EXHIBIT 7: PREVALENCE OF METRICS USED FOR INCENTIVE PLANS

ANNUAL INCENTIVE METRICS	LONG-TERM INCENTIVE METRICS	
Customer Satisfaction (80%)	Net Income/Profit Growth (64%)	
Contract/Subscriber/Member Growth (73%)	Risk-Based Capital Ratio (41%)	
Net Income/Profit Growth (53%)	Membership Growth (29%)	
Operating Income (47%)	Contribution to Surplus/Reserves (24%)	
Revenue Growth (40%)		

Though increases in revenue and profits are commonly used measures, it is important to keep in mind that they do not necessarily reflect true organic growth. Revenue increases can be a result of pricing increases and profits can be impacted by reduced utilization (which we saw during the pandemic). Market share metrics are the best indicator of true organic growth.

EXHIBIT 8: EFFECTIVENESS OF METRICS USED IN INCENTIVE PLANS

INDICATOR OF GROWTH

MODERATE	BETTER	BEST	
Revenue Growth	Net Income/Profit	Membership/Enrollment/Market Share	
Can be influenced by price increases	Can be influenced by operating costs, revenues, expenses	Signifies new membership	

While no health insurer reported using Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) metrics in their executive incentive plans at the time the 2022 TPR Survey was conducted, organizations are working towards doing so. In an earlier pulse survey¹² conducted by BDO to understand how companies might have made progress towards linking ESG and executive compensation:

- 50% of the health insurance participants reported planning to incorporate ESG measures in their executive annual incentive plans.
- ▶ 33% of health insurance participants reported planning to incorporate ESG measure in their executive long-term incentive plans.

As ESG begins to serve as a basis for conscious consumerism and garners increased attention from customers, investors, and employees, we will likely see organizations increasingly link ESG factors to their executive compensation plans.

BDO's Take

Incentive compensation is a critical tool for driving the right business strategy as well as attracting and retaining executives. Business conditions are anticipated to remain uncertain and changeable, thereby complicating the design of executive incentive compensation. It is important to know what other companies are doing; however, it is also important to ensure your program aligns with your company's unique market, mission and strategy and is structured correctly to balance the needs of all stakeholders.



Supplemental Executive Retirement Plans and Change of Control Agreements Can Strengthen an Executive Pay Package

Companies frequently expand executive compensation packages beyond compensation and standard benefits to include Supplemental Executive Retirement Plans (SERPs) and Change of Control agreements (CoC), for purposes of attracting and retaining critical talent.

PREVALENCE OF SERPS AND COC AGREEMENTS AND THEIR POTENTIAL VALUE

In addition to cash compensation, executives may be eligible for SERPs or CoC agreements:

- ▶ SERPs provide benefits above and beyond those covered in other retirement plans.
- ▶ CoC agreements are designed to incentivize executives to remain with the company upon a change in control/ acquisition by another company and may provide a severance, bonus payments or accelerated vesting of equity awards.

These plans, also called "Other Potential Post-Employment Payments" per the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), are very common as they are offered by 60% of health



SERPs are non-qualified, meaning they do not require annual certification by a pension actuary, so they have a higher risk of not attaining target fund goal, especially if the SERP invests in the same company stocks or options, which many do. SERP benefit distributions also have higher tax potential than qualified pension plans.



STEVE LIOU Director, Insurance Advisory





It is especially important to monitor the potential value of these upon a triggering event¹³ (42% of surveyed companies require a double trigger), as the size of the payouts can be newsworthy. Boards, management and other stakeholders are advised to be cognizant of the size of these potential payouts and ensure that the amounts are appropriate and defensible. For instance, the potential annual annuity of retirement benefits, including SERPs, is 58% of the CEOs salary level (see Exhibit 9).

EXHIBIT 9: POTENTIAL ANNUALIZED VALUE OF SERPS EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE OF CURRENT BASE SALARY¹⁴ -

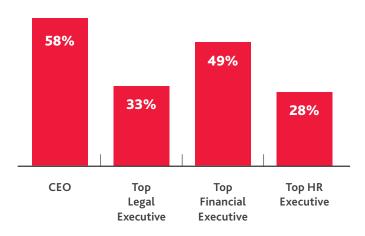
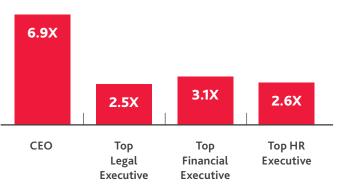


EXHIBIT 10: POTENTIAL CHANGE OF CONTROL PAYOUT EXPRESSED AS A MULTIPLE OF CURRENT BASE SALARY¹⁵

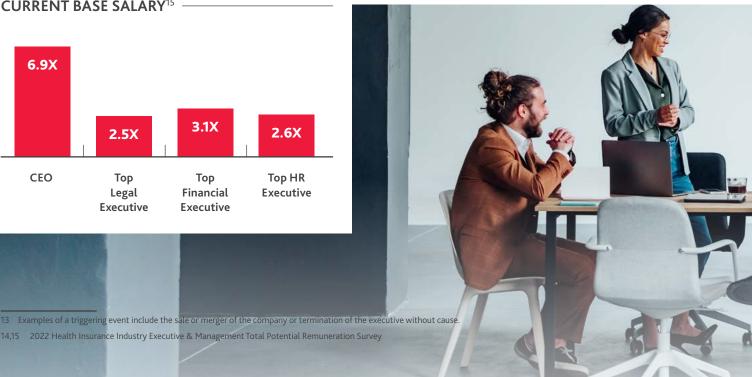


The potential payout for a change of control agreement is nearly seven times the CEO's salary level — which can translate to a payout of several million dollars. While the payouts for other executives are lower, they are still significant. Calculating the walk-away value can help compensation committees make informed compensation decisions.

It is not only a matter of how much an executive will be compensated, but also how that compensation will be paid out. Three-fourths of health insurers reported change of control payouts are in lump sum form which makes the optics related to public perception even more challenging.

BDO's Take

Designing an executive compensation plan that strikes the right balance between meeting corporate goals, attracting and retaining critical talent, as well as appearing reasonable to the public (who may not understand the complexities and market challenges of the job) can be challenging, especially in a volatile economy. Expanding executive compensation packages to include other potential post-employment payments comprise numerous factors around human resources, accounting, tax, regulatory and more. Organizations need to determine the appropriate total compensation strategy that takes into consideration internal factors (e.g., their business philosophy, mission, structure) and external factors (e.g., industry, tax and accounting regulations, workforce composition).



Who Has a Seat at the Management Table?

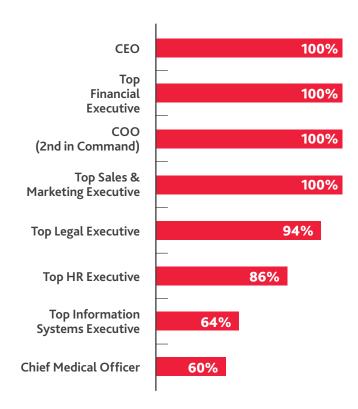
As the name implies, the Senior Leadership team provides high-level leadership and direction for an organization. Senior leaders establish an organization's strategy, policies and standards while steering core initiatives.

WHO IS PART OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM?

The first question is to determine which positions are typically considered part of senior management. We asked this question in our survey, the results of which are shown to the right. The analysis includes only those positions matched by at least 50% or more of participating companies (see Exhibit 11).

The highest-ranking positions overseeing departments and functions are commonly included at the "senior management table". Recently, health insurers are making room at the table to include the Top Information Systems Executive and Chief Medical Officer role. Having representation from these leaders supports a broader understanding of critical issues and brings more expertise for development of solutions. Determining the right mix of senior leadership roles to be included on the management team is vital and will be dependent upon the organization's strategy.

EXHIBIT 11: POSITIONS PART OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM¹⁶





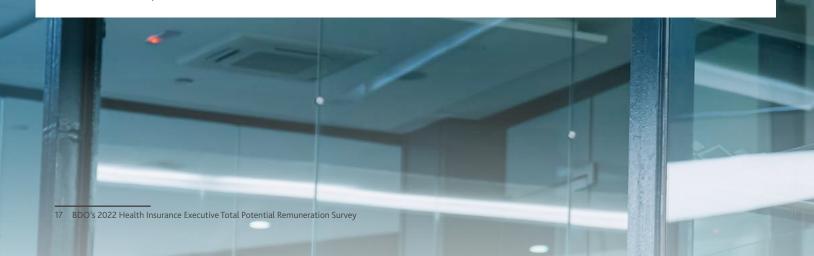
Another way to assess the influence of a position is to analyze its reporting relationship to the CEO. For this analysis, we determined the percentage of companies for which the role reports directly to the CEO (see Exhibit 12).

EXHIBIT 12: COMPOSITION OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM AND CEO DIRECT REPORTS¹⁷

	PERCENTAGE OF COMPANIES		
POSITION	WITH POSITION	PART OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM	REPORTS DIRECTLY TO CEO
CEO	100%	100%	NA
Top Legal Executive	100%	94%	81%
Chief Medical Officer	94%	60%	47%
Top Financial Executive	88%	100%	100%
Top HR Executive	88%	86%	79%
Top Information Systems Executive	88%	64%	21%
COO (2nd in Command)	75%	100%	100%
Top Sales & Marketing Executive	56%	100%	89%

The table highlights some interesting findings:

- Most, but not all, health insurers have a Top HR Executive. While the Top HR role is typically considered a part of the senior management team, in some cases HR does not report to the CEO. This finding is interesting as the Top HR Executive manages the biggest expense item − compensation and benefits.
- ▶ Nearly two-thirds of health insurers consider the Top Information Systems Executive a part of their senior management team, but this role only reports to the CEO at less than one-quarter of health insurers.
- ► For the health insurers that have a Top Sales & Marketing Executive, all of them include that role on the senior management team; and almost nine out of ten times, the role reports directly to the CEO.
- ▶ A few significant functions are notably missing from the list of those with a seat at the table, including the heads of actuarial, underwriting, claims, service operations, government operations, to mention a few.



BENCH STRENGTH VERSUS BUYING TALENT

Turnover has been high in recent years and is almost always costly. About half of health insurers (55%) reported that in 2022, executive turnover was about the same compared to prior years. However, over a quarter of health insurers (27%) experienced higher turnover levels for executives. Having a vacant senior leadership role is costly to replace for several reasons:

- ► The first and probably most critical is the loss of their institutional knowledge and expertise which can result in interruptions in operations.
- ► The second is the disruptions to the team as they have lost their leader.
- ► Finally, the cost of recruiting to fill the position is the expense that often is most discussed, most easily quantified, but may be the least important in comparison to the first two issues.

For those reasons, it is critical to have a talent pipeline strategy to fill key roles quickly with qualified and competent people, ideally from within the business – **bench strength** An organization's bench strength is essentially a pool of competent employees qualified to transition into specific leadership roles.

ACTIONS HEALTH INSURERS ARE TAKING TO ATTRACT/RETAIN TALENT

As noted above, it is important to have a pipeline of talent as well as a succession plan for filling key roles. This is especially important for those periods of CEO transition and/or organizational realignment when executives tend to leave. Judy Canavan, Managing Director in BDO's Global Employer Services practice explains, "health and economic related challenges over the last few years have placed a new set of burdens on executives. This has caused many of them to rethink their priorities and consider looking for roles at companies that are more in alignment with their values."

Attracting and retaining senior executive roles is not an easy process and the stakes are high for organizations to ensure they onboard the right employee who will have a part in shaping the direction and future of the business. With increased turnover levels in a volatile economy, employers are determining how to effectively attract critical talent, and make sure they stay. For executive roles, organizations have increased their usage of offering retention and hiring bonuses. For all employee levels, initiatives tend to be focused on total rewards transparency, promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I), and improving corporate culture (see Exhibit 13).



EXHIBIT 13: ACTIONS HEALTH INSURERS ARE DOING/CONSIDERING TO ATTRACT/RETAIN TALENT²⁰

ACTION	ALREADY DOING	CONSIDERING DOING
Create or promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) initiatives	73%	18%
Improve culture to increase morale/have a more favorable public reputation	73%	9%
Create a total rewards strategy to focus on all elements of remuneration	64%	27%
Create a total rewards report to highlight "hidden" elements of compensation	45%	27%



I don't believe there is a 'right number' of positions for the senior management team. The key is having the right positions on **your** team. If you haven't reviewed your team's makeup lately, you might need to invite some new members.



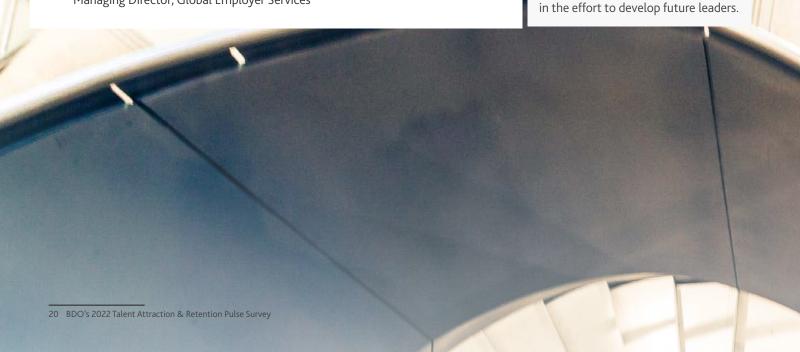
MIKE CONOVER

Managing Director, Global Employer Services

BDO's Take

An experienced, knowledgeable and committed senior management team is vital for an organization to thrive. The team sets the path for the organization and inspires employees to succeed. It is imperative that organizations create the right senior management team who can build and maintain the growth of the business. This means providing a seat at the table and access to the CEO to representatives from all areas of the organization. However, being invited to the table requires that each individual leader develop and bring a business-minded approach. Functional leaders, especially those overseeing staff support, must be mindful of the costs and benefits of the strategy they pursue and the programs that they develop. Without this perspective, they might not be invited to contribute.

In addition, organizations need to invest the time to develop a pipeline of qualified and competent employees who are ready to shift into key leadership roles. This has become increasingly difficult as the war for talent escalates and work-from-home policies create a new set of challenges in the effort to develop future leaders.



Conclusion

The health insurance industry is influenced by several major factors, including: government regulation and associated costs; aging population; new demands for technology; increasing healthcare costs; rising inflation; and consolidation. As health insurers face a challenging and volatile economic landscape, there are opportunities to come out on top. Organizations need to:

- Attract and retain senior leaders who can navigate the new reality and foresee future trends – and the cost of this is increasing.
- Determine an appropriate total compensation strategy that takes into consideration internal factors (e.g., their business philosophy, mission, structure) and external factors (e.g., industry, tax and accounting regulations, workforce composition) identifying the best performance metrics in an everchanging environment presents a unique challenge. It is important to focus on the fundamentals.
- ➤ Create the right senior management team include those who bring a business minded approach and can build and maintain the growth of the business. Ensure that the right talent has a seat at the table and access to the CEO.

About Our Survey

BDO's annual Health Insurance Industry Executive & Management Total

Potential Remuneration (TPR) Survey reports compensation, benefits, perquisites and contract agreements for over 40 executive and senior management positions in health insurance organizations. Survey responses are gathered annually from participating health insurance organizations with three categories of analyses:



COMPENSATION LEVELS



TOTAL POTENTIAL REMUNERATION LEVELS



POLICIES AND PRACTICES



About BDO's Global Employer Services Practice

The professionals in BDO's Global Employer Services practice are dedicated to helping companies achieve their business and financial goals by effectively managing their most important asset — **their people**.



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Expatriate Tax

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Workforce in Transactions

Helping companies assess risks, costs, and exposures relating to the people and HR elements of all transaction types by providing workforce due diligence and post-deal strategy services spanning the full people and organization continuum.



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ERISA Consulting

Providing design, administration and support for qualified retirement plans, including traditional defined benefit pension and cash balance plans, 401(k) Profit Sharing, 403(b) and ESOPs; annual compliance testing, preparation of plan documents and government filings, plan corrections, compliance reviews and M&A due diligence.

Actuarial Services

Providing cash balance and other tax-qualified defined benefit plan services in addition to retiree health/welfare and non-qualified plans; design, implementation and administration of employer-tailored cash balance plans; resources for long- and short-term planning, funding, accounting, termination, and M&A.

Contact Us

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