



# GLOBEX UPDATE

## Health & Benefits

*Events, developments, and opportunities in the international marketplace*

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### APAC EMPLOYERS SEE DROP IN EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY

Employers in Asia are noticing a drop in employee productivity due to some health risk factors. A recent workplace survey revealed that employees are reporting to work with high levels of mental and physical ailments. As a result, employers are faced with productive days lost per employee due to absenteeism and presenteeism (when workers turn up but are ineffective because they are ill, distracted or unwell). Among the APAC countries most affected, Hong Kong employees lost more than 30 per cent of their working time to absenteeism and presenteeism. Employees reported that they were suffering from depression, fatigue, and uncertainty with work responsibilities, with more than 20 percent of employees dealing with obesity issues. This led to an average of 79 productive days per employee year lost. Additionally, Hong Kong ranked lowest for access to employer-provided wellbeing initiatives, with more than a fifth of employers having no type of wellbeing program interventions within their benefit plans. By contrast, employers in Thailand that have introduced wellness programs have reported up to a 15 percent reduction in sick leave requests and a rise in productivity.

### BAHRAIN AMONG TOP WORK LOCATIONS FOR EXPATRIATE EMPLOYEES

According to a recent expat survey, Bahrain ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> among best destinations for expat careers. Employees cited the potential for high earnings as being the top reason for working in Bahrain with more than 75 percent of expats stating that they have seen a salary increase since moving. Expats also revealed that Bahrain has some of the best comprehensive benefits packages, with many foreign employees receiving an accommodation allowance and medical allowance and some report receiving bonuses to help cover living expenses. Productivity among expats has also improved with 70 percent of employees reporting that moving to Bahrain has had a positive impact on work-life balance compared to being in their home country.

#### Success Stories

- Helped US partner broker win new technology client by demonstrating a strong global capability in finalist presentation.
- Secured group travel medical policy for large manufacturing client.

### SAUDI ARABIA LOOKS TO PROVIDE RELIEF FOR EXPAT FEES

Saudi Arabia has recently approved legislation to ease levies businesses pay on foreign workers. The plan will exempt some companies for the fees imposed in 2018 or even reimburse the fees some firms have already paid. However, in order to qualify for the exemption or to have the fees reimbursed, companies will need to demonstrate progress in hiring more Saudi national employees. The fees that were introduced in 2018 as part of an economic plan for the country has come under heavy scrutiny from employers and has led to a departure of thousands of expat workers which is having a major impact on the Saudi economy.

*Recruiting and retaining key talent around the world remains a formidable challenge for HR management. More and more, a company's success depends on the ability to offer a competitive benefits package while remaining within budget. Globex Partner Brokers can offer their clients access to a range of products, capabilities and resources custom-tailored to helping multinationals optimize their employee benefits around the world. Contact any member of the Globex Health & Benefits Team to learn more.*

**GLOBEX BROKER SERVICES**

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