

# 2020

## A COVID-19 YEAR IN REVIEW



2020 proved to be a year unlike any we have seen before and challenged both the absence management industry and DMEC to adapt and evolve. As we mark the one-year anniversary of the pandemic, we reflect on our accomplishments — despite having to canceling our in-person events and shifting to virtual conferences. This report offers a look back on 2020 and explores how DMEC addressed the unique challenges brought on by COVID-19.



## JANUARY 2020

At the beginning of the year, we launched an **FAQ Friday series**, which covers a wide variety of topics — including the ADA, the FMLA, RTW and SAW, technology, and state and local policies — in a concise, easy-to-digest format delivered every other Friday. This series proved to be a timely, positive addition to DMEC’s resources to address both standard and COVID-19-related questions throughout the year.

On Jan. 29, we hosted the second **DMEC Online Summit Event**, offering employers the opportunity to cost-

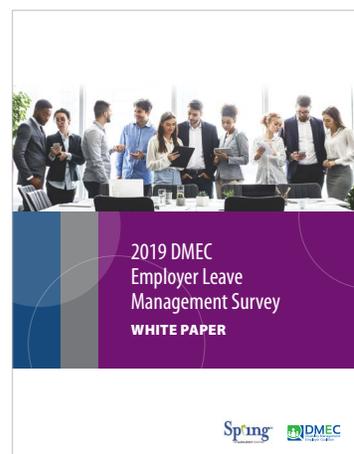
effectively train their

teams. The Summit

featured three of the most highly rated sessions from the 2019 DMEC Annual Conference.



## FEBRUARY 2020



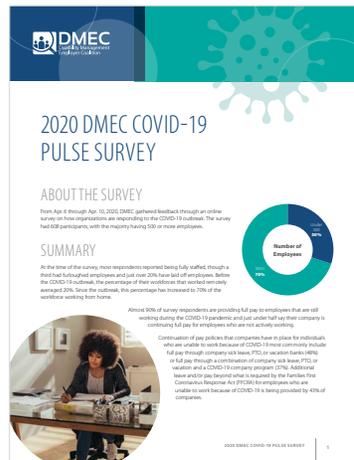
We released the results of the **2019 DMEC Employer Leave Management Survey** in a webinar on Feb. 6 and a white paper on Mar. 6. The annual survey offered insight into employer trends on managing regulatory and non-regulatory leaves, the ADA, RTW programs, and state and municipal paid leave programs.

MARCH  
2020

The **2020 DMEC FMLA/ADA Employer Compliance Conference** was scheduled for Mar. 23-26 in Boston, and it was shaping up to be another strong year of attendance and education. As the threat of the virus increased and closures began, DMEC made the decision to cancel the in-person event and shift to an online format. In three short weeks, DMEC transitioned to a live one-day event on Mar. 23 that included a panel discussion, *COVID-19: The New Normal*, and recorded 24 additional sessions for conference attendees to view for one year.

At the end of March, we created the **COVID-19 Resources Page** on our website to serve as a collection point for valuable information and insight into COVID-19, newly enacted laws and regulations, workforce implications, and more.

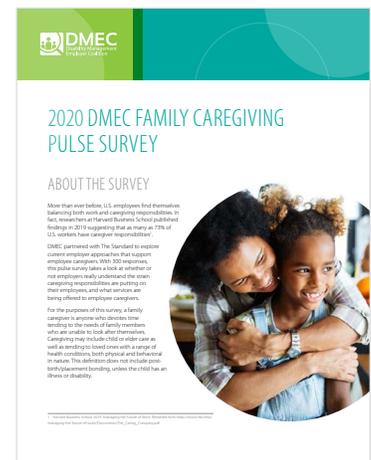
APRIL  
2020



As the virus continued sweeping the nation, we surveyed our members to understand how employers were responding to the pandemic. The **2020 DMEC COVID-19 Pulse Survey** showed the rapid shift to remote work, the introduction of new leave policies, updates to existing company policies and processes, and more. It was clear from the survey that the industry was rapidly adjusting and adapting to the new normal.

At the end of April, we conducted the **2020 DMEC Family Caregiving Pulse Survey** to look at the strain of caregiving responsibilities, and what services are being offered to

employee caregivers. With school and care facility closures and greatly expanded caregiving responsibilities related to the pandemic, this survey proved to be a timely look at a growing problem for both employers and employees.



For Mental Health Awareness month, DMEC partnered with eMindful to help members address the growing mental health crisis brought on by the pandemic. Through the partnership, we offered **eMindful's live, virtual mindfulness solution** free to member's employees for 90 days.

In May, we also launched a **new format for DMEC's FMLA and ADA Training for Supervisors and Managers** to make training front-line leaders even easier. The new SCORM training package can be purchased one time and delivered through an organization's online learning management system.

MAY  
2020

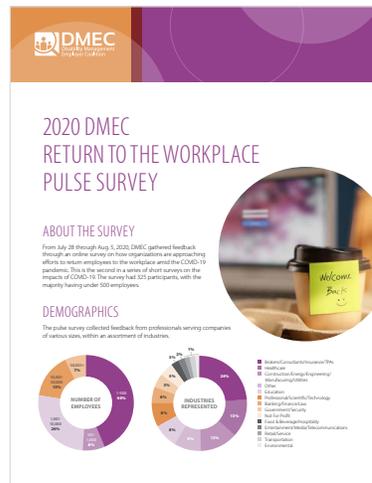
JUNE  
2020

With the coronavirus still holding its strong grip on our lives and severe travel restrictions for employers and suppliers, DMEC announced that it would transition the **2020 DMEC Annual Conference** to a virtual format in August and focus on the theme of *COVID-19: The Post-Pandemic Workforce*.

JULY  
2020

With rising concern across the country about systemic racism, DMEC hosted the **Combating Unconscious Bias — Strategies for Developing Cultural Awareness Webinar** on July 28. The session offered practical strategies to interrupt bias and repair the harm caused by it.

The U.S. Department of Labor announced the release of updated optional-use FMLA forms, which DMEC members had provided input for at the 2018 DMEC Compliance Conference. To assist employers in making the most of the new forms, we hosted the **FMLA Forms Revamped — The DOL Weighs in on Updates Webinar** on July 30 with Christine Schott, Acting Director at the DOL to review the changes.



In July, we also surveyed DMEC members about how organizations were approaching efforts to return employees to the workplace amid the pandemic. The **2020 DMEC Return to the Workplace Pulse Survey** showed that while some employers had already begun returning employees to the workplace at the time of the survey, many others were still in the planning stages and remote work was still strongly in place.



## AUGUST 2020

Hundreds of employers and suppliers gathered virtually on the four Wednesdays in August to attend the COVID-19-focused **2020 DMEC Virtual Annual Conference**. Expert speakers guided attendees through navigating the new legal landscape, providing support to their workforces, returning employees to the workplace, and operating in the post-pandemic future.



We also released the **2020 DMEC Employer Leave Management Survey** with new questions around COVID-19 implications for leave management and plan design benchmarking.

In August, DMEC and the Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC) announced a **new collaborative agreement** which allows DMEC to provide ADMS and CDMS designees pre-approved continuing education through our webinars and conferences.

## SEPTEMBER/ OCTOBER 2020

The **fall slate of webinars** kicked off and offered a range of sessions on COVID-19 topics such as caregiving, the return to the workplace, the pandemic's impact on employer leave, the mental health crisis, and much more.

## NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER 2020



The **November issue of @Work magazine** took a deep dive into the rapid rise of telehealth since the start of the pandemic and its implications for supporting employees' mental and physical health moving forward.

Despite a year of COVID-19 pivots, DMEC transitioned to a **new association management system**. There was pre-planning and preparation and a data conversion and implementation in mid-November. The new system offers DMEC members and customers a streamlined purchasing experience and enhanced DMEC account offerings.

This infrastructure change also sets up the ability to deliver additional member benefits in the years to come.

As we closed out the year, it was clear that many employers had taken the opportunity to train their teams with the **Certified Leave Management Specialist program** and **DMEC webinars** throughout 2020. The CLMS program had a record-breaking 689 registrants in 2020 (nearly double what we saw in 2019), and average webinar registration was up to 709 attendees, with five webinars surpassing the 1,000-attendee mark.

While uncertainty was the only constant during 2020, DMEC was honored to support the amazing and tireless community of absence and disability professionals who were on the front lines of the crisis, working to ensure their employees' health, safety, and financial security.