

## **Drawing attention to family planning**

### **"Family Forward": A new initiative to advance family planning in Switzerland**

- Encourage and support individuals and couples in the areas of family planning, work-life balance and fertility.
- Stakeholders and experts will meet to exchange ideas at the launch event on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April in Bern.
- Invitation to interested organizations in shaping the initiative and tailoring it to the specific needs of Switzerland.

**Zug, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024** – In partnership with Thriving Talent, the Healthcare Businesswomen Association (HBA), the Swiss Consumer Forum and Merck, a new initiative will be launched on 29<sup>th</sup> April to provide individuals and couples with better information and support in the areas of family planning, work-life balance, and fertility. The launch event in Bern will shed light on the increasing complexity of family planning and its various implications. In addition, experts and affected individuals will discuss the challenges, contemporary family planning options and how companies can contribute to this topic.

Family planning has become increasingly more complex. Studies show that starting a family involves many biological, financial, and personal difficulties, often conflicting with the career aspirations of those involved. <sup>1</sup>

#### **Calling for more support, education and understanding of all parenting styles**

"Birth rates in Switzerland are at an all-time low. Every fifth couple in Switzerland has difficulties having children. Together with our partners, we want to use Family Forward to draw attention to the consequences of social change and develop solutions," says Florian Schick, President Merck Switzerland.

Children are the future of every society. Family Forward, therefore, sets new impulses for the support of all families, including LGBTQ+ couples and families created through assisted reproductive technologies.

Natalie Wilkins and Deborah Croft, Co-CEOs of Thriving Talent, a founding member of the Family Forward Initiative, emphasize the importance of aligning company values with employee expectations. "Employees want to work for companies that adhere to their values and support their concerns. The goal of Family Forward is in alignment with Thriving Talent's vision. Our experience supporting over 100 companies on their diversity and inclusion journey demonstrates that those capable of promoting integration have a competitive advantage. Supporting employees at different life stages enhances talent attraction and retention." Family Forward calls for increased awareness and destigmatization of fertility, promotion of workplace equality, and improved access to family planning options and treatment. The initiative also aims to explore the extent to which employers and insurance programs, whether public or private, can contribute to these endeavors.

#### **Speakers and experts gather in Bern for a collaborative exchange**

The Family Forward launch event will take place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2024, from 4:00 PM to 6:15 PM, followed by a networking aperitif until 7:30 PM, at the Hotel Bern. Esteemed experts including Prof. Katja Rost from the University of Zurich, Natalie Silverman, and Becky Kearns from Fertility Matters at Work UK, alongside affected individuals and representatives from prominent Swiss companies, will convene to discuss contemporary challenges and opportunities in family

planning. They will explore ways to increase public awareness and outline potential corporate contributions. The event is free of charge and will be conducted in English.

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[www.familyforward.ch](http://www.familyforward.ch)

**References:**

1. Tino Senoner: Shortage of skilled workers & global resource bottleneck (<https://dynaskills-dynajobs.com/our-analyses>)