

# 16

WAYS TO  
KEEP A  
HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN  
STRONG &  
AFFORDABLE



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TPAs. *Discover the Benefits.*<sup>SM</sup>



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**IT ALL BEGINS  
WITH PLAN DESIGN.**



With businesses and their employees struggling to manage costs in the face of double digit rate hikes, plan design is critical to your future success. Here are a few practical strategies to consider.

## **1. Understand that analyzing market swings is a full time job**

Independent third party administrators (TPAs) specialize in employee health benefits and have their finger on the pulse of the markets they serve. This gives them the ability and know-how to help employers adapt to market swings.

## **2. Depend on a professional for local market knowledge**

Provider networks, insurance carriers, referral sources and other intermediaries are all a part of the resources we use to help our clients react to market swings and economic change. Because benefits administration is our ONLY business, we're in touch with them all on an on-going basis.

## **3. A TPA will begin by reviewing previous claims experience**

The only way to keep health care coverage strong and costs in check is to begin with a careful analysis of an existing plan. We offer this service to prospective clients at no cost or obligation.

## **4. Larger organizations should compare partial self-funding to their existing coverage**

Organizations with 50 employees or more owe it to their employees and their bottom line to compare. Again, an analysis of the current plan design and claims experience will enable us to determine if self-funding can make a difference.

## **5. Review existing managed care programs to determine their value**

As part of our analysis and plan design process, we will take a close look at any provider contracts or discounted arrangements to determine whether or not the covered group is receiving every available dollar of cost savings.

## **6. Plan design must help employers accomplish their benefit objectives**

Today, just offering a health insurance plan may not be enough. The right health benefits can help employers attract and retain the best people in their industry... people needed to succeed in the marketplace.

## **7. And meet the specific needs of their covered employees**

Because no two covered groups are alike, no one should settle for an off-the-shelf health care benefits program. We can help employers determine how to use their benefit dollars and give their employees the help they really need.

## **8. Identify the appropriate managed care strategies**

Managed care can mean a lot of different things today. And what made dollars and sense a few years ago may not be as meaningful to the bottom line today.

## **9. Implement strategies which will help measure their effectiveness**

The right benefits professional will have the technology needed to help determine whether or not a PPO network or utilization review strategies are really providing the value they were designed to achieve.

## **10. Get the help needed to identify the finest providers in your community**

Many think a network is a network is a network, but after decades in the benefits administration marketplace, we know better. We can provide the custom reporting services to help answer these questions and make informed decisions.

## **11. Nothing increases peace of mind like easy, convenient access to providers**

If we've learned one thing from managed care, it's that the doctor-patient relationship must be preserved first and foremost. Building easy access to the community's finest providers into every health benefit program is a must.

## **12. Prompt turn-around on claims will increase employee satisfaction**

Our claims administration technology and individual expertise on the part of our claims examiners is the foundation of our business. Whether it's prompt payment or standard management reporting, we make a positive difference for each organization we serve.

## **13. Treat providers like partners and everyone will benefit**

Rather than viewing the physician or hospital as an adversary, we encourage everyone involved to do everything possible to enhance the doctor-patient relationship. Not only does the patient benefit, but so will the organization and the provider.

## **14. Offer access to the ancillary coverages workers need most**

Because few companies can provide an unlimited menu of benefit programs, we offer access to a wide range of ancillary products and services. Many can help meet the specific needs of employees cost effectively.

## **15. Provide an annual benefit summary to each employee**

Along with other forms of employee communication, a benefit summary will give each employee a full understanding of the benefits received and the value enjoyed.

## **16. Work to keep the lines of communication open at all times**

From enrollment to claim settlement, we make it easy for employees to obtain the information they need in a media and format that's convenient and understandable.

As a full service TPA, we're accustomed to helping our clients respond to change. If you need to rethink a benefit program, or if you have a question about any of the strategies described in this pamphlet, give us a call today. We'll be happy to assist.

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