



Products and Services:

Benefits & Financial Suite

- > Coverage Advisor

Summary:

Coverage Advisor helped our client achieve its open enrollment goals by:

- > Offering a way for employees to forecast their healthcare use with the associated costs, which helped them pick the best plan based on their needs.
- > Providing user-friendly and reliable information, including cost estimates for typical health treatments.

Results:

- > 56% of client's employees enrolled in a consumer-driven plan
- > 7% enrolled in a Health Savings Account plan

Large Employer Takes The High Road To Insure Its Workforce

A Case Study

LONGER-TERM STRATEGY, WELL-PLANNED APPROACH

In an effort to reduce the spiraling cost of providing healthcare benefits to its employees and maintain a positive image as it relates to benefits in general, a large employer with a high-percentage of hourly workers executed a well-managed rollout of a consumer-driven plan among their employees.

They used effective communication techniques and a range of benefit solutions to achieve their organization's consumer-driven healthcare goals. WebMD Health Services played an integral role in the client's endeavor by providing access to a powerful plan-comparison tool called WebMD Coverage AdvisorSM.

ANALYSIS & SOLUTION

Launching a consumer-driven health plan (CDHP) can be a daunting task for any organization. So, when the time came for our client to address their specific concerns about the trend-line of employee healthcare benefits, and the role CDHPs would play in their company, they chose a longer-term strategy and well-planned approach to tackle these issues. The primary steps of their plan consisted of the following:

STEP 1: Develop an Effective Communication Plan

From the start, the company knew that consumer-driven plans had the potential to generate significant cost savings and high adoption rates, if employees could grasp the concept of the CDHP model. They were particularly concerned about the financial exposure of employees who might select a CDHP for the wrong reasons (e.g., because CDHPs have lower premiums, etc.). As a result, the client implemented a comprehensive communication plan at its various locations throughout the U.S. This plan included "train-the-trainer" sessions, informational rallies, and email communications – all of which were designed to educate employees on the benefits of the new CDHP options and how Coverage Advisor could help them determine the right CDHP option based on their needs.

STEP 2: Check the Data

CDHPs can be overwhelming on the surface, especially during the hectic open enrollment season – the client understood that. To head this concern off at the pass, the client sat down with their health plan team and internal experts to run various scenarios on Coverage Advisor and model certain benefit designs – all in advance of the open enrollment launch date. This gave the client a unique opportunity to fully understand their plan options, confirm that they had in fact selected the plans that would work best for employees, and resolve any issues that might arise down the road. This was especially important to the client, given that

fact that they were offering several account eligible options, such as Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) and Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRAs).

STEP 3: Give Employees Easy Access

One of the most important goals of this project was to provide easy access to Coverage Advisor for thousands of employees who were dispersed strategically in multiple locations nationwide. Ultimately, through careful planning and the innovative technology of Coverage Advisor, the client was able to give 198,000 employees access to the tool in stores via kiosk stations, laptops in the lunchrooms, and other creative, yet cost-effective ways.

STEP 4: One Step at a Time

Finally, the client set modest CDHP uptake goals for themselves, and used a “test the water” or phased approach, which allowed them to launch their CDHP options in an effective yet easily digestible manner.

Coverage Advisor

Coverage Advisor is part of WebMD Health Services' Benefits & Financial Suite of tools. This suite is designed to help consumers make better benefit decisions, manage their healthcare dollars, and understand the financial implications of their healthcare and lifestyle choices

For more information, please contact whsinfo@webmd.net.

THE RESULTS

Ultimately, the Benefits & Financial Suite helped the client achieve its open enrollment goals by:

1. Offering a way for employees to forecast their healthcare use with the associated costs, which helped them pick the best plan based on their needs.
2. Providing user-friendly and reliable information, including cost estimates for typical health treatments – directly online via kiosk stations and laptops.
 - > 44% of their employees used Coverage Advisor
 - > 56% enrolled in a consumer-driven plan (this client refers to their 2 HRA plans and the HSA plan as CDHPs)
 - > 7% enrolled in an HSA plan

LESSONS LEARNED

Good use of communication, education, and tools to help employees understand the impact of newer, different benefit plans on their wallet will help employers meet their goals. Benefit plans that share the savings with employees work very well, and if you can show people that they will be much better off financially (short and long term) with consumer driven plans, adoption rates of these plans will continue to beat your forecasts!