



## Maximizing Open Enrollment for Employees

Open enrollment can be an overwhelming time for both employers and employees.

Employees are given the opportunity to re-evaluate their current benefits and make changes for the coming year, while employers must weigh different benefits packages and facilitate the enrollment process.

With all these moving parts, it's important that employers educate and communicate with their employees effectively.

Below is a typical open enrollment process timeline. Be sure to share this timeline with employees so they know what to expect.

- **Notification** – Employers send out an organization-wide announcement alerting employees that open enrollment will begin shortly.
- **Receipt of information** – Employers distribute information about benefit plans, selection information and the appropriate forms to their workers. Employees may also receive personal information based on their elections from the previous year.
- **Making decisions** – Employees research their various benefits options and discuss with family to determine which benefits they will elect for the coming year.
- **Enrollment** – Employees select their benefits.

Beyond the enrollment period itself, there are a number of opportunities for employers to make the process smooth for everyone.

Here are some strategies:

- **Establish solid communication between the HR department and employees.** To do so effectively, conduct meetings and seminars, and offer calculators, intranet education information and benefit fairs. If your organization is smaller, conduct one-on-one meetings with employees to determine exactly the type of information they need.
- **Survey your employee population to determine their priorities** (e.g., which products they use and preferred methods of communication). By doing so, employers can identify exactly what their employees want, and workers feel their needs have been heard by decision-makers.
- **Customize benefits and information resources to the life stages of your employees.** For instance, if you have a large older population, feature more retiree benefits and long-term care insurance.
- **Consider offering new benefits, even if they are voluntary,** such as dental insurance, vision insurance or benefits for prescription drugs. Employees tend to make more changes when they receive new options.

- **Provide easy-to-understand tools.** This will lessen employee confusion and the feeling of being overwhelmed while trying to make tough decisions.
- **Offer a second, off-cycle enrollment period when new benefits are featured.** This can be a time for employees to focus on voluntary benefits and other offerings that are not traditional. These benefits are typically overshadowed by health insurance and retirement options, so a second off-cycle enrollment is a great time for employees to focus on their other needs.
- **Make plan information as simple as possible, while also being interactive.** Employees should be able to understand their offerings to make more knowledgeable decisions.
- **Maintain all SPDs on your website,** rather than directing employees to the insurance carrier site for information. This provides easy access and makes the company appear more in control of the information.

Overall, a successful and effective open enrollment process can have a dramatic impact on the relationship between employers and their employees. By catering to their needs and wants, employers will ultimately make the experience more enjoyable and worthwhile for their workers. As a result, they will feel more secure in their benefits decisions throughout the plan year.

# Summary of the 2019 Employer Health Benefits Annual Survey

Each year, the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research & Educational Trust conduct a survey to examine employer-sponsored health benefit trends. This article summarizes some of its main points. Request a full summary from Cornerstone Benefit Plans, Inc. for more details.

## Plan Enrollment Trends

- Preferred provider organizations (PPOs) – 44% of workers covered
- HDHP/SOs – 30% of workers covered
- Health maintenance organizations (HMOs) – 19% of workers covered
- Point-of-Service (POS) plans – 7% of workers covered

## Health Insurance Premiums

The average premium rose 4% for single coverage and 5% for family coverage – around \$7,188 and \$20,576 respectively.

## Worker Contributions

In dollar amounts, workers contributed \$1,242 and \$6,015 toward their premiums for single coverage and family coverage, respectively.

## Self-funding

Similar to the previous year, 17% of workers with small employers are elected in plans either partially or entirely self-funded, compared to 80% of workers with large employers.

Contact us for more information on benefit offerings or to learn what you can do to control your health care costs.



Jerry Ciaramitaro  
President, JD, MBA



Jason Ciaramitaro, VP  
Benefit Advisor



Jordan Ciaramitaro, QPFC  
Benefit Advisor

*For more information, please contact our office at:*

*Phone: 248-641-2740*

[jc@cornerstonebenefitplans.com](mailto:jc@cornerstonebenefitplans.com)

[www.cornerstonebenefitplans.com](http://www.cornerstonebenefitplans.com)

