

PLEASE READ SECTIONS THAT APPLY TO YOU --- IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON WHEN YOU CAN RENEW OR CHANGE YOUR PLANS AS WELL AS IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS.

MEDICARE CLIENTS - - -

Annual enrollment is between October 15th and December 7th, as it is every year. In late September you should be receiving an Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) from the Medicare Advantage plan or Prescription Drug Plan carriers. (Those of you that have a Medigap plan will not receive an ANOC since the plan design remains constant). The ANOC is a very important document. It will compare the plan design in the present year to the new plan design for the upcoming year. It will clearly outline the changes in premium, deductibles, copays, out of pocket expenses, etc. If you like the proposed changes, please call me to let me know you reviewed it, and it will automatically change to the new plan on January 1st. If you are not happy with the changes, please call my office to schedule an appointment to review other options within the same carrier or with another carrier. This appointment needs to be scheduled during the above time frame in order for the change to take place.

ACA CLIENTS - - -

The open enrollment period for 2017 is between November 1st and December 31st. If you want your coverage to be effective January 1st, you need to sign up by December 15th. Remember, these plans are all calendar year plans. You should receive a letter from your present health insurance carrier hopefully by early October. The letter will let you know if your present plan will be available next year, and if so, what the new premium and plan design will be. If you want to keep the plan the same, please contact me, and we will roll it over into the new design. However, if you want to make a change, please schedule an appointment prior to December 15th to review other options.

Due to strict enrollment periods associated with this law, if you do not make a change by the end of the open enrollment period, you will not be able to make a change until the following year unless you have some time of qualifying life event, which needs to be documented in writing.

As with the previous year, I am expecting large rate increases. The insurance carriers submit their information to the state in April, but do not hear back until possibly September. I believe Highmark requested a 48% increase and UPMC requested a 17% increase. Again, it needs to be approved via the PA Department of Insurance. Once you get your packages from the carriers with that information, please let me know how you would like to proceed.

For those of you who signed up via the Federal Marketplace, remember every year you need to update your information, including financial information. You also need to be sure that you filed your 2015 tax return and reconciled your advanced premium tax credits (APTC). Please confirm with your accountant or financial advisor regarding this prior to open enrollment. I am unable to advise you on any matter regarding this as I am not a financial advisor.

NON ACA CLIENTS - - -

This pertains to those of you who have kept previous health insurance plans through Highmark (Keystone HMO and Complete Care), and UPMC (Individual Advantage plans such as EPO Value 500, 1000, and HSA 1300). It is still unclear as to whether you will be able to keep these plans for the upcoming year. You should be receiving a notice directly from the carriers. If you can keep your plan, it should have the renewal increase as well. As soon as you receive this information, please contact me and let me know so we can review some of the ACA options as well to make sure that your plan, if available, continues to be the most cost effective for you and/or your family. The time to make a change is between November 1st and December 15th in order for the change to take place January 1, 2017. If you don't make a change within the open enrollment

period, you will not be able to for 2017 unless you have a qualifying event, such as move to a new geographic area, marriage, loss of job based coverage, etc.

EMPLOYER GROUP CLIENTS - -

Some of you have already renewed during the course of this year, but many of you will be renewing on December 1, 2016.

For UPMC Groups- Groups that are currently in a medically underwritten plan (NON ACA GROUP PLAN) that renew in November or December 2016 will have the following options:

Option 1- Elect a 14 month renewal (November) or a 13 month renewal (December) and then renew again on January 1, 2018 in an ACA compliant plan.

There are certain rules regarding deductibles and out of pocket expenses which I can explain to you all in more detail.

Groups selecting this extended renewal must decide before their November or December 2016 renewal date; this option WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE at a later time.

Option 2- Groups may choose a 12 month medically underwritten renewal and then renew in an ACA compliant plan in November or December of 2017.

Option 3- Groups may choose a 12 month ACA compliant plan for their November or December 2016 renewal.

A few other points--- Employer groups with HSA plans are not eligible for the extension.

UPMC November renewals will be released by early September, and UPMC December renewals will be released around September 20th. As always, once I receive your renewal, I will help you understand your options and how to proceed. I am finding that this year some of the ACA options are at a lower renewal rate increase than the non ACA renewals.

FOR HIGHMARK GROUPS- According to present reports from Highmark staff, groups that are currently in a medically underwritten plan (NON ACA GROUP PLAN) that renew in December 2016, will be offered a non ACA as well as an ACA renewal, both of which will be a 12 month renewal, until December 2017. These renewals will hopefully be released by the end of September.

IMPORTANT INFO FOR ALL GROUPS, which was already shared last year - - -

**Full time employee is considered 30 hours
Waiting period for health insurance
coverage to start cannot exceed a total of 90 days,
which means if you offer the 1st of the month, the
longest time is the 1st of the month following 60
days.**

**An employer MAY NOT pay or reimburse
an employee for individual health insurance.
(This does not pertain to group plans.) If you are
in this situation, please consult with your
accountant. You may be able to offer them more
money in their pay, but it can't be targeted for
health insurance, and it will be subject to taxes.
Again, I am not a financial advisor, so please
direct questions regarding this matter to your
accountant.**

2 UPCOMING WORKSHOPS - - Seating is limited- Please RSVP to guarantee space

Medicare Educational Seminar- no plan specific information will be provided. Elaine Cole, Public Affairs Specialist for Social Security Administration will be reviewing Original Medicare – including eligibility, application process, different parts of Medicare, late enrollment penalties and income related monthly adjustments. This will be held on Friday September 16th from 1 pm until 3 pm at the Icomplex at Southpointe, 114 Southpointe Boulevard, Canonsburg, PA 15317. Please call 724-260-0341 for more information.

Affordable Care Act Seminar – I will be reviewing the ACA- including how to enroll, enrollment periods, Federal Marketplace vs. Direct with Health Insurance Carriers, types of plans available, and projected plans and rate changes for next year. This will be held on Tuesday, October 11th from 1 pm until 3 pm at the Icomplex at Southpointe, 114 Southpointe Boulevard, Canonsburg, PA 15317. Please call the office for more information.

Visit my updated website at
www.bluepeakinsurance.com



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