

April 2008 Edition

Topic: Employee Benefits Hints and Tips

Most of us offer some kind of benefits for our employees, ranging from a basic health plan, to life and disability insurance, a dental plan, and even cancer, accident, and other insurances. The more we offer our employees, the more secure they feel. However, as our benefits get more complex, so too do the challenges of staying on top of claims, enrollments, etc. Here are a few basic tips to help you keep things organized and simple.

Your Broker-

Whenever possible, it is in your best interest to have one broker for all of your benefits. Your broker should be able to provide health, supplemental, and voluntary insurance. If you only have one broker, you only have to remember one phone number when you have a question. If you are just starting out in the broker selection process, be sure to ask them if they personally can provide you a suite of products, or do they need to bring in other brokers to help with some products?

Handling New Employees-

Most plans require you to add new employees to your benefit plan as you hire them, rather than waiting for open enrollment. Some products will require individualized quotes. If you have the resources to create the quotes yourself, that is great. However, this is another task that your broker should easily and willingly help with. They will usually need a modest amount of information, such as age and salary, to give you rates for new employees. A good broker will also help facilitate the application process. This helps eliminate delays due to application errors, and ensures that applications are sent to the correct address.

Filing Claims-

Some products, like health insurance, don't require much effort on the part of the employee when a claim is incurred. However, products like disability and most supplemental plans require that an employee file a claim. The claim process tends to be similar regardless of the insurance company, and it is a process with which your broker should be familiar. When an employee is filing a claim, they should always keep copies of everything they send to the insurance company. Also, more information is better. Employees should be encouraged to send as much information as they have when filing a claim. Finally, your broker should be able to give assistance. If they are not able or willing, it is probably time to look for a new broker.

Paying the Bill-

It is in your best interest to reconcile your invoices. On voluntary products, verify that the amount you are deducting from your employees' pay matches the amount you are being charged. On group products, make sure you understand why the amount you are being charged has changed. Was there a rate increase, an additional or terminated employee, or was a previous payment not credited?

When in doubt, contact your broker. It is generally easier to take the time to figure out the solution up front than it is to try to correct an error after the fact.