

SCHOOLCARE *Bulletin*

Health Benefit Plans of the New Hampshire School Health Care Coalition

Winter 2016

The Changing Health Care Landscape

The Introduction of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marked the end of an era. For years, rising health care costs were considered the norm with double-digit trend driving costs. When the ACA was enacted in 2010, a key factor was the inclusion of an excise tax – a tax on high-cost employer-sponsored plans. With the cost of care already so high, this tax forced a change in thinking for employers and employees alike. Employers began looking for lower cost plans and ways to save on overall costs while maintaining cost sharing. Employees began to think in terms of what to bargain for including contributions in premiums, wages, flexible spending accounts while educating themselves on various avenues to cost share effectively.

In response to this changing climate, as well as employer and employee needs, SCHOOLCARE began exploring plans with higher deductibles and lower overall premium costs. Beginning July 1, 2013, the Yellow plan, a consumer-driven health plan, became an option with and without a Choice Fund for both employers and employees. In the past year participation in the Yellow plans has grown to nearly 18%!

In 2015, with the excise tax coming closer, some groups asked for the “next generation of Yellow plan”. Focus Group meetings were held to poll Membership as well as Board of Directors’ feedback resulting in a new plan design, the Orange plan. The Membership Council unanimously voted at the Annual Meeting on November 3, 2015 to offer the Orange Plan

beginning July 1, 2016. The Orange plan has higher out of pocket limits than the Yellow, but greater flexibility to couple with various tax-exempt vehicles. This plan, in addition to the existing Yellow Open Access Plans (both with and without Choice Fund), form a suite of consumer-driven health plans (CDHP) that can be offered together. Below are more particulars on the new Orange plan.

Orange Open Access is a lower cost, high deductible plan. As a qualified high deductible plan, it meets IRS rules for Health Savings Accounts (HSA). HSAs are tax-exempt savings accounts which permit employees and employers to contribute funds (up to annual limits) to be used for eligible medical expenses. While FSAs and HRAs can be pre-funded, HSA funds are only available as funds are added to the account. However, while FSA funds and HRA funds will expire, HSA funds do not expire as the account is owned by the employee. Thus, they are portable if the employee leaves or retires. Below is a chart that outlines the various funding structures.

	FSA	HRA	HSA
Employee funding	✓		✓
Employer funding	✓	✓	✓
Debit card available	✓	✓	✓
Fully funded at inception	✓	✓*	
Portable			✓
Available for all family members	✓	✓	✓**
Funds roll over each year	✓*	✓*	✓
Can be used together	✓	✓	

*If agreed to by employer or CBA

**IRS qualified tax dependents only

The Importance of Consumerism

As groups continue to move towards the CDHP suite of plans, consumerism is also being pushed to the forefront of health care. With higher out of pocket exposure, consumerism puts the control back into the hands of the health care consumer. The need for individuals to become more informed consumers, a mission that SCHOOLCARE has shared since its inception, will continue to lead discussions about health care. Here are some ways that you can begin to promote consumerism in your group and everyday life!

- ✓ Utilize MyCigna.com to compare cost by searching in the provider directory
- ✓ Use Urgent Care Facilities when and if appropriate (not a true emergency)
- ✓ Save on Routine Blood Work using LabCorp or Quest Diagnostics!

These first steps to becoming more informed will not only be eye opening but will also help to minimize out of pocket costs when in the deductible stage of a consumer-driven plan.

Open Enrollment Update

It's hard to believe that open enrollment is just around the corner! Given the level of activity this fall with an interest in the CDHP suite of plans, SCHOOLCARE anticipates numerous groups will have plan changes for July 1. Transitioning to a CDHP can be confusing for employees if they are not educated about the plan. We strongly encourage groups that are changing benefit plans to call their SCHOOLCARE Group Relations Specialist at 1-800-562-5254 to schedule open enrollment meetings early. We are happy to assist!

Open enrollment materials will be available in mid-April for all groups. In keeping with SCHOOLCARE's "Go-Green Initiative", all open enrollment materials will be made available electronically, as well as on the SCHOOLCARE website by employer group. This provides a convenient way to disseminate materials to employees (and reduces paper!).



These occasional Bulletins are mailed (via post and e-mail) to Membership Council Representatives and other contacts. Please reproduce this material and distribute it to all subscribers in your locality. Contact Jeff Kantorowski at 224-7751, ext. 337 or e-mail jkantorowski@schoolcare.org if you have any questions about the contents of this Bulletin.

Good For You! Update

New tools that are **Good For You!** Recorded webinars available for playback at any time have been added to the SCHOOLCARE website at www.schoolcare.org to assist in registering for the program. You can also learn more on how to earn points and navigate the website! All of these tools and resources are found by clicking on the **Good For You!** link on the top right of the SCHOOLCARE webpage.



Good to Know!



Below are tips to make your life easier using the NEW **Good For You!** online portal.

- **Are you in on the fun & cash incentives?** You still have time to earn cash incentives through 6/30/2016. Get started today, employees and covered spouses can **earn \$300 each:**
 - Member Health Assessment **\$75**
 - Biometrics Screening **\$75**
 - Health Coaching **\$50**
 - Preventive Care **\$100**
- **So what's a biometric screening?** A measure of physical characteristics such as height weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose.
 - If your physician has ordered blood work anytime from 1/1/15 to current, ask the doctor's office to complete the Physician Lab form which is located under the "Resources" tab on your **Good For You!** account.
 - SCHOOLCARE has also scheduled 8 on-site biometric clinics this spring in various locations throughout NH. To find out more visit the "Events" section on your **Good For You!** account.
- **Don't miss out on your Quarter 3 program activities.** Earn incentives for working out and taking action on your health.
- Cash incentives are paid by check at the end of the month following the month in which the quarter ended (ex: Quarter 3 ends 3/31/16, so incentives will be issued by 4/30/16). Every point equals \$1!