



Plan Early and Shop Around

It's never too early to start preparing for the next plan year

In today's ever-changing health care market, it's never been more important for employers to plan early and shop around for their company health insurance.

"Too many employers simply pay their premiums without a full understanding of what they are purchasing, how well it meets the needs of their employees and how much it affects their bottom line," says Amadou Yattassaye, President, HealthLink.

If your 2018 plan just went into effect, it could be the perfect time to start thinking about next year. As an employer, your broker, network partner or insurance carrier should be a trusted resource for making benefit decisions and ensuring your plan meets all industry standards and regulations.

"Employers should start the planning process by working directly with these partners to examine the current plan and its performance," continued Yattassaye.

Aspects such as claim history and spending trends should be evaluated. It may also be beneficial to compare the current plan to those of similar companies to determine if the benefits are competitive. From there, employers can consider different solutions to make next year's plan more effective. Typically, the more informed and involved the

employer, the more successful the benefit plan.

Here are some of the top products and services that employers implement to make their benefit plan more successful:

Medical Management

Through a variety of different types of interventions, medical management addresses the use of services and their appropriateness according to medical standards, the quality of members' experiences, and the cost of the medical care. It's not only about saving money; it also helps employees avoid being exposed to unnecessary services.

Telemedicine

Telemedicine programs offer live, on-demand doctor visits via a phone or video call, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When an employee consults with the telemedicine program, there can be significant cost savings for the employer as well as the employee. And, telemedicine programs have been found to help reduce the amount of emergency room and urgent care visits.

Behavioral Health & Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Employees who don't receive the appropriate help for mental health, substance abuse issues,

or challenges in their personal life, are likely to experience higher medical claims, poor productivity and increased absenteeism.

Expanded Behavioral Health and EAP services can help employees with the individualized support they need, leading to increased risk management and productivity for employers.

Health & Wellness Programs

There are a variety of health and wellness programs that can be implemented to help employees manage their health. Disease management, 24-hour nurse line, maternity management or corporate discount programs are all great options to help employees take charge of their health – while also managing costs.

Start Planning Today

No matter what changes you decide to make for the next plan year, it is important for employers to stay informed and engaged with their employee benefit offering. It's not only one of the largest expenses of running a company, it also has the potential to make the biggest impact on what's most important to your business – your employees.