

MAKING HEALTH CARE DECISIONS IN TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES

The pressure is on. Costs are rising, the economy is stagnating, and reliable predictions of when better times will arrive are hard to come by.

These pressures heighten employers' concerns about their ability to pay for employee health benefits, which continue to beat inflation year-by-year.

Delivering effective employee benefits in these tough economic times requires taking a fresh look at a proven alternative: the self-funded health benefit plan provided with the support of an employer cooperative.

A Strategic Approach

The Alliance employer cooperative supports efforts to take a strategic approach to paying for health care benefits by controlling costs, improving quality and engaging individuals in their health.

Self-funded plans backed by The Alliance enable employers to develop and control an effective health benefit strategy through:

- > Access to data about costs, utilization, and outcomes
- > Flexible plan design
- > Group-based purchasing plans that optimize provider discounts
- > Value-based approaches that tie medical outcomes to provider payment levels
- > Wellness initiatives that increase productivity and health for long-term gains

How Self-Funding Makes A Difference

Instead of settling for short-term solutions, businesses that develop self-funded health plans are seeking long-term improvements in the cost and value of their health benefit program.

Self-funding has the potential to create long-term savings on health benefit costs while addressing these crucial elements of business operations:

- > **Security:** Basing provider contracts on value-based purchasing principles to protect employers against cost-shifting and inflation and to incent providers to deliver higher quality care. Check the case studies posted at www.the-alliance.org for first-hand accounts of employers' experiences.
- > **Agile Decision-Making:** With self-funding, the combination of good data and flexible plan design improves cash flow while making the business more responsive to market conditions.
- > **Productivity:** Self-funded health plans help businesses use wellness initiatives and disease management to increase worker's time on the job.
- > **Return on Investment (ROI):** Traditional plans tend to emphasize short-term savings that may be wiped out by next year's premium increase. With a self-funded plan, the emphasis on ROI leads to significant, measurable savings over time.

It Pays to Learn More

Schedule a visit with an Alliance team member by calling 800.223.4139 or 608.276.6620, ext 6643 or e-mail mms@the-alliance.org. Learn more about our services at www.the-alliance.org.

Employer Checklist

Use this checklist to determine whether self-funding can help your company maintain employee health benefits. Each checked box is one more example of how you can benefit from membership in The Alliance.

Do you have a...

- Workforce of at least 100?
- Need for group purchasing power?
- Desire to access data?
- Emphasis on long-term ROI?
- Value-based purchasing approach?
- Health benefit strategy?
- Goal of continuous productivity improvement?
- Need for immediate cost savings?

A Leadership Cooperative

The Alliance moves health care forward by controlling costs, improving quality, and engaging individuals in their health. We have a proven record of leadership, which is made possible by committed business leaders who share their energy and insights to develop groundbreaking approaches to self-funded health benefits.