



BROKERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Health Insurance Agents Help Consumers and Employers
Secure Affordable Health Insurance



MAINE



National Association of Health Underwriters
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Personal Testimonials on Why Brokers Make a Difference

For more than 85 years, professionally licensed health insurance agents, brokers and consultants have provided valuable healthcare financing services to individuals and employers. Professional agents have extensive knowledge about health insurance plan design, benefits, and pricing. Many small employers can't afford to have this level of expertise in-house, nor do they have the time to administer a comprehensive, compliant benefits package for their employees.

In fact, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has reported that agents and brokers often “handle the responsibilities that larger firms generally delegate to their human resources departments — such as finding plans and negotiating premiums, providing information about the selected plans, and processing enrollees.”

With HIPAA, COBRA, ERISA, and federal and state tax requirements to contend with, not to mention all of the new requirements stemming from ACA, professional agents spend a great deal of time helping their clients understand the regulations, complex products and compliance issues.

Health insurance customers who use agents report being satisfied not just with their insurance, but also with the work performed by their agents – especially when it comes to the agent's role in finding the right policy.

A recent Kaiser survey found that brokers and agents have a 92 percent approval rating when helping healthcare consumers in the new marketplace.

Professional agents work extremely hard and need to be very knowledgeable in order to stay abreast of the rapid changes in the healthcare system. It would be very costly for a governmental agency in some far off location to match the service and value agents bring to their clients, and it would not be able to replace the personal relationships agents develop with their clients.

Ongoing Support from an Agent

Individuals and business owners typically don't pay any more for employee benefits purchased through an agent or broker than if they purchased the coverage directly from an insurance company. Insurance carriers set aside a small portion of the premium to pay brokers a commission, which covers not only the selling of the plan but also much of the servicing required. In today's declining commission environment, agents spend more time than ever before servicing their clients – a testament to their commitment and dedication.

Agent Associations

NAHU is the only national association working solely on behalf of health insurance agents and benefit professionals. NAHU requires each of its members to always make healthcare coverage recommendations with the customers' best interest in mind.

For more testimonials on NAHU members helping individuals and employers find appropriate health insurance, please go to www.brokersmakingadifference.org.

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"Our agency is a small agency with locations throughout the state of Maine. Our state is rural in nature and small in population, which gives us limited access to health carriers. We work with approximately 200 businesses. The carriers that we do have in Maine do not have any local on-site assistance for employees regarding enrollment and service/support. Our home office is located in Presque Isle, Maine. Presque Isle is 30 minutes from the Canadian border and close to eight hours north of Boston. This is an area where business growth is very limited. Not many carriers or agencies are looking to open their doors for an office that would serve the largest town with a population of only 8,800 people. But, all these citizens still need assistance and guidance and that is where our firm plays a role.

Our clients rely heavily on our staff for advice and assistance. The health insurance marketplace has become so complicated with changes in legislation, plan design and benefit offerings that it has become a full-time job for a person to be well-versed in all aspects of the industry. A small "Mom and Pop" shop just does not have the resources or abilities to take this on by themselves. They rely on our office for services that they would not receive from the carrier or through any form of state/federal agency. We provide an independent review of their benefits and shop their plan to ensure they are still receiving the most competitive options available.

Our role goes way beyond the annual renewal cycle. Our firm is heavily focused on day-to-day services. We direct our clients to contact our firm with any questions and concerns. This invitation extends

to all employees of a business, not just the owners. We handle items such as assisting with the explanation of benefits, and helping to balance billing issues that may be occurring while they are undergoing treatment for a health issue. We assist employers in the area in the establishment of wellness programs with the goal of improving the health of our workforce. From simple claims such as lens reimbursement requests, to the analysis of 10-year trends in claims for prescription use, we assist our clients in every avenue possible.

Our firm has just celebrated its 30th anniversary. We work and live in the communities we serve. We

pay taxes, buy locally and support those who are in need. We place a strong emphasis on giving back to the communities that have made our growth a success. Our clients truly value the role we play in helping them navigate through the ordeal that health insurance has become. They truly feel they have an advocate working on their behalf providing the expertise with integrity that they would not otherwise have were it

"Licensed health insurance producers (agents and brokers) provide a wide range of services for both individual consumers and the business community.

Producers interface with insurers, acquire quotes, analyze plan options, and consult clients through the purchase of health insurance... It is essential that [policymakers] recognize and protect the indispensable role that licensed insurance professionals play in serving consumers."

-The National Association of Insurance Commissioners

not for their broker."

- Scott Boucher (Broker)

