



BROKERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Health Insurance Agents Help Consumers and Employers
Secure Affordable Health Insurance



TENNESSEE



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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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"There are many stories to be told. Today's is to talk about where we spend much of our time each day. Most would think a broker/adviser/consultant is all about selling new groups. However, this could not be further from the truth.

I have a small-group agency with about 60 business clients. Most I have worked with for more than 10 years and several are approaching 20 years.

We spend much of our time fixing claims, saving money and reducing financial stress for our clients. Plans and provider networks are very confusing to most people. Problems arise with plans not paying claims correctly, or sometimes correctly, to the unpleasant surprise to our clients.

We had a client whose daughter-in-law was taking her granddaughter to an out-of-network speech therapist for more than a year. While I fault the provider as well as the mother, it was a major financial issue. When the collection companies became a terrific problem, the mother-in-law, who owns the company that provides the insurance, was finally notified. She wanted to make things right with the \$12,000+ that was owed.

When we became involved, they were all very upset with each other and the system that had let this happen. We began contacting the providers, the billing company and the collectors. Through several months of negotiations, we were able to reduce the balance to under \$4,000 and resolve the problem.

We are very proactive and provide excellent benefit communication materials and employee meetings

to educate employees about how their plans and networks work along with our contact information. Unfortunately, with many different situations, we still have many who learn after the fact how their plan works in a specific situation.

This is just one story of hundreds, but it shows the value and responsibility we have to our clients and their employees. Saving money on premiums and building sustainable plan designs is important, but so is taking care of the employees who are spending hard-earned dollars to pay premiums and claims.

The health insurance industry is a great place to make a difference and living. While there are many changes happening across the country, it only makes our roles more important. I believe the future is very bright for our industry if you are willing work hard, pay attention and stay current with the new landscape."

- David Moore (Broker)

"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

"Two of my clients are a couple and the husband has cancer.. Several years ago he purchased what he thought was health insurance. He pays over \$300 a month for his coverage. He has to have regular CT scans that cost \$7,000, but his insurance pays him back \$150 every time he has a CT scan. This couple—he's retired and his wife drives a school bus—owe over \$100,000 in hospital bills. He wanted to buy some decent insurance, but because he has this mini-med plan that is no good for his serious condition, he is not eligible for the state or federal plan. His wife's school insurance tells her that his voluntary disenrollment from his current plan is not a qualifying event, and therefore, they will not



BROKERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

allow her to put him on her insurance. I could do nothing to help this man.

Whatever we do, it should benefit people, not insurance companies, lobbyists, congressmen, senators or insurance agent."

- Mary Nita Bondurant (Broker)

