



BROKERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Health Insurance Agents Help Consumers and Employers
Secure Affordable Health Insurance



COLORADO



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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"In 2008, I had complete kidney failure. At the time my insurance company did not have a dialysis clinic in network in the Ft. Collins area. The closest clinic was in excess of 30 miles away. My wife called Brad Niederman of Niederman Insurance Agency who helped us get our original policy. Brad was able to get an exception made with the insurance carrier in a matter of hours to have my emergency dialysis covered in a local clinic. I have been using Brad since 2003 and he has helped me and my wife to secure affordable health insurance since. I would trust no one else with something as important as our health insurance."

- John Ratajczak (Client)

"I am an agent in southern Colorado. I have been in the insurance business for over 33 years. With the Medical Loss Ratio regulation, I cannot service my customers as I would like to. Most of them have a hard time with deductibles, coinsurance, copays and provider network. I have the expertise regarding coverage possibilities for the individual and also understand the concerns that affect this location.

We are on the border of New Mexico and Colorado, and now that most plans are HMO's, they do not realize the impact if they go out of network. Also a lot of the new plans have deductibles on emergency rooms, etc. on top of the deductible. I think some of these people signing up are going to be in for a big shock when they have a big claim. The worst thing is these people go online, sign up and then call me for assistance. Not a good deal.

I wrote a customer through the exchange and it took

4 months to get his account straightened out; all for \$20.00."

- Elaine Fodor (Broker)

"Every insurance company in the state refuses to sell child-only policies, with the exception of one because that carrier obtained a waiver to the medical-loss-ratio provisions due to its small size and also has a deal with the state of Colorado. The premium for a newborn or 1-year-old is over \$300 per month!"

- Mitch West (Broker)

"Penny has been a big help to me as I have had to navigate the realm of health insurance. She took the time that was necessary to help me understand my choices and to get all the paperwork done. She is also very friendly and enjoyable."

- Tracee K. (Client)

"We have an agency of 10 personnel here in Western Colorado. The new COBRA regulations have been very confusing to our clients and for the past month, we have been holding employer

meetings to assist our clients in managing the new regulations. We have been providing them with copies of the regulations, election forms and the new IRS 941 form.

Our meetings have been detail-specific and we are fielding calls daily on proper procedure. We are very aware of our clients' needs and always have a real person answer our incoming calls. Our staff strives to satisfy the needs of that client on that phone call. We also have one of our staff members whose job is to help our individual members with claim and administrative needs that our insurance

"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



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companies cannot respond to in a timely manner. This person and the rest of our staff have helped our agency have a 97% consistency rating over the years. Our primary focus is to provide the best service of any agency in western Colorado."

- Bill Killgore (Broker)

"Penny was a pleasure to work with for my health insurance needs. She knew all of the ins and outs of insurance coverage in Colorado and helped me—even with my complicated health history—obtain coverage. Penny immediately responds to e-mails, and with great detail. She is always patient and willing to answer my questions, Penny gets two thumbs up!!"

- Cameron C. (Client)



working and ethical people. I am one of them!"

- Robin Mitchell (Client)

"My office spends no less than 20% of our time educating people on their Medicare benefits. Cover Colorado (the Colorado option for the uninsurable) options, Child Health Care Plus eligibility, and options for which we as agents receive no compensation for our work. This is a service we whole heartedly and willingly provide because these people need assistance in understanding the health care system and what all of their options are.

Within the past two days alone, we have assisted four people in applying with Cover Colorado, taking a COBRA option with another broker, and applying for a Medicare Part D plan, none of which we receive payment for. We, as brokers and agents, are constantly striving to educate ourselves with Medicare and other systems that don't compensate us. The people we help are most appreciative and have referred other people to us, which is a plus for our "business" side. They have said that we have given them more information in a couple of hours than their employers, Medicare or Social Security has given them in numerous attempts.

There are always self-serving individuals in every market, but I know the agents who belong to organizations such as the National Association of Health Underwriters are some of the most dedicated, hard

