



BROKERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Health Insurance Agents Help Consumers and Employers
Secure Affordable Health Insurance



ALABAMA



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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"I was sitting with an average blue collar warehouse worker. He came in for his annual enrollment meeting with us. It was his first time with us and was a little tough because he HAD to meet with us to be sure he had all his benefits settled properly. As we got to talking with him and introducing him to some options, we found out he was married. He was the only paycheck being provided in the household of a wife and 3 little girls. We obviously discussed life insurance (of which he said he had none). His response to us was, "I will not pay for some other man to sit in my easy chair." At this point, I had been quieter than I needed to be as I stated back to him, "Without enough life insurance, you will leave your wife no choice." He was thoughtful of my words, but in the end did not want to get any life coverage.

However, in our conversation he had mentioned he rode a motorcycle. We then brought up the accident plan which covers him based on the severity of any accident on or off the job and it would pay a lump sum to him for any trips to the emergency room, broken bones, cuts, etc. He liked the sound of that because he recalled a few incidents at work and at home while working in the yard causing him to be out of pocket some money with his health insurance co-pays and deductibles. He decided to go ahead and get that policy.

Not six weeks later, he was in a motorcycle accident that hospitalized him for over 30 days with major breaks and surgeries finally taking their toll as he dies in the ICU. The policy he purchased paid not only for all the things done to preserve life, but also another \$25,000 to his beneficiary (wife).

All totaled, his wife and girls received a little over \$50,000 of benefit from a policy he got because we listened.

In the end, a true advisor listens and pays attention to the details of life that can make a big impact towards someone protecting themselves and/or their families."

- Gene Ramsay (Broker)

"I have been a Medicare sales representative for 15 years. During that time, I have developed an excellent discourse with numerous community centers of influence. I have been an avid proponent of doing

the job right. Even the Area Agency on Aging discusses issues with me and a handful of agents who have mastered Medicare and educated the area of Mobile on not only our plan benefits, but also Medicare itself. Many times, I have left clients with total confidence that they now were clear on how Medicare is administered, including reimbursement rates, demographics, etc. Until plans came along, the federal

government did and still does send out a book for people coming under Medicare. This book, even after the untrained person reviews, is totally confusing to beneficiaries. I don't simply enroll people, I educate them. I even go as far as to get all other help for clients, something the federal government obviously spends little time doing.

An example of this is:

One day I went to Irvington to an appointment. I had difficulty locating the beneficiary's residence until I noticed a house in the middle of a field. I was training another agent that day and told him to

"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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drive down a pig trail into the field, thinking maybe my client lived there. As we neared the house, which was totally dilapidated, I noticed tracks going around the house. It led us to a trailer, also in total disrepair. An elderly lady who was about 80 years old lived alone in the trailer.

Upon questioning her, it became clear she was destitute and needed help. It was revealed her total income was under \$400 per month, and still the government took out the Part B premium of \$96.40. We were in complete disbelief. I asked her if the trailer belonged to her. She said no, but that her friend died and her friends' children didn't have the heart to make her leave. She stayed there for free, but almost starved to death with no heat or air conditioning. I took it upon myself to fill out an Alabama Medicaid Agency application for her, which was approved and eliminated the \$96.40 premium which raised her income drastically. I enrolled her into a no premium SNP plan with no deductibles or co-pays.

Now, she even has a ride to go to the doctor's office—before I met with her, she didn't even have a doctor. She had not seen a doctor in 15 years because she couldn't afford one due to deductibles and coinsurance. She now gets medication for \$0-\$3 on each prescription, annual physicals, vision, and pays \$0 for all healthcare. She actually broke down crying about someone caring for her.

I am in the helping business. It is my job to help my clients. The government doesn't contact you—if you need special help, you must contact the government. We do an excellent job going the extra mile for our clients. How else will people, many uneducated, know what is available if we don't contact them? The above story is true, and I come across this every day on my job. To eliminate the agents like myself who go into the highways and byways helping these people will hurt them to no end. Please make this a priority!"

- John Walley (Broker)

