eHealth

Health Insurance Cost Management: eHealthInsurance Releases Year-End Tips for Consumers

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MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA, Dec 01, 2009 (MARKETWIRE via COMTEX) -- eHealthInsurance (NASDAQ: EHTH), the leading online source of health insurance for individuals, families and small businesses, today released tips to help consumers maximize their healthcare dollars in 2009 and better manage expenses in 2010.

-- Tip #1: Read your mail. It's not unusual for health insurance companies to notify you of upcoming changes to your rates, benefits or covered providers during the last couple months of the year. These changes are often communicated through mailers which many people throw away without reading. Pay attention to the fine print to be sure your current health plan will continue to meet your needs in 2010.

-- Tip #2: Consider shopping around. If your rates or deductibles are increasing dramatically in 2010, or if any life changes may affect your personal coverage needs, it's time to shop around. New individual and family health insurance products are introduced all year long and you may find a better match for your needs and budget.

-- Tip #3: Work your deductible. Many health insurance plans come with a deductible that resets every calendar year. If you've already met your deductible for 2009, last-minute claims may be covered at a lower out-of-pocket cost to you before the new year. Conversely, if you expect to have a lot of healthcare expenses in 2010, you may want to schedule care for early next year so you can fulfill your deductible as soon as possible.

-- Tip #4: Ask about fourth-quarter rollover. If you've contributed a lot toward your deductible in the last three months of 2009, you may wish to contact your health insurance company to ask about "fourth-quarter rollover." Some health insurers will allow dollars paid toward your deductible in the last months of 2009 to "roll-over" or count toward your 2010 annual deductible. This gives you a head start in meeting your deductible in 2010.

-- Tip #5: Don't miss out on calendar-year benefits. Some health plans cover annual physicals with little or no out-of-pocket cost, and it's nice to start the new year with a clean bill of health. If you have dental or vision coverage, you may be eligible for a cleaning, check-up or contact lenses or glasses. Check with your insurance company to make sure you make the most of your coverage before the year ends.

-- Tip #6: Use up all funds in your FSA. Funds in most employer-sponsored Flexible Spending Accounts don't roll over from year to year. Check with your Human Resources department or FSA administrator to see if you have money left in your FSA, and make use of it before the end of December.

-- Tip #7: Get a jump on your News Year's resolutions. Check with your health insurance company to see if they offer discounts with local or national health clubs. Some do, and you could save money on monthly membership cost for yourself or your family.

-- Tip #8: Remember to deduct your medical expenses. If your family's medical costs for the year (not counting monthly premiums) are approaching 7.5% of your adjusted gross income, those expenses may be tax-deductible. Check with your tax advisor or the IRS website to see if you are able to deduct these expenses.

--Tip # 9: Fully fund your HSA. If your health plan features a Health Savings Account (HSA), fund it to the maximum amount before the end of the year to receive the best tax benefit. Unlike FSAs, dollars in your HSA roll over from year to year and can serve as a "rainy-day" fund for future emergencies.

-- Tip #10: Don't wait around for health insurance reform. If you're uninsured or underinsured, don't wait for Congress to pass health insurance reform legislation. The fact is that most of the proposed reforms probably won't take effect until 2013. With the rising cost of healthcare, going without the coverage you need today is gambling with your financial future.

About eHealth eHealth, Inc. (NASDAQ: EHTH) is the parent company of eHealthInsurance, the nation's leading online source of health insurance for individuals, families and small businesses. Through the company's website, http://www.eHealthInsurance.com, consumers can get quotes from leading health insurance carriers, compare plans side by side, and apply for and purchase health insurance. eHealthInsurance offers thousands of health plans underwritten by more than 180 of the nation's leading health insurance companies. eHealthInsurance is an online marketplace licensed to sell health insurance in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, making it an excellent model for successful, high-functioning health insurance exchanges. Through its eCommerce On-Demand solution (eOD), www.ehealth.com/eOD, eHealth is also a leading provider of on-demand e-commerce software services. eHealth's eOD platform provides a suite of hosted solutions that enable health plan providers and resellers to market and distribute products online. eHealth's eCommerce On-Demand solution is currently available to health plan providers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. eHealthInsurance and eHealth are registered trademarks of eHealthInsurance Services, Inc.

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