

a healthy conversation

Take control of your health care with consumer driven health plans

New health insurance options provide you with choices and opportunities

From Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield

There's a saying, "if you want something done right, do it yourself." That phrase aptly describes the latest option in health insurance: consumer-directed health care (CDHC). CDHC's are a different approach to health care, but one that promotes education, involvement and smart decisions. It can help you to take charge of your care and introduce you to a world of savings and healthful activities.

Through education and active participation in your health, you can control your health care costs. With a CDHC plan, you can determine when, where, and who you see for medical care. And with this particular plan type, there's more value and savings on health care coverage and expenses.

There are three parts to a CDHC plan.

High-deductible Health Plan (HDHP) — A high-deductible health plan lowers monthly premiums in exchange for

higher deductibles and out-of-pocket costs. You pay the full cost for health care expenses, up to your plan deductible, instead of paying copayments. Once you reach this limit, your plan pays benefits. It is important to know that eligible annual physicals, well-child exams, immunizations and cancer screenings like mammograms, are typically covered at no cost share, under an HDHP.

Health Savings Account (HSA) — This is an account that lets you set aside pre-tax money to pay for qualified health care expenses, including those subject to your health plan deductible. You must have a qualified HDHP to be eligible for an HSA. There are total contributions limits set by the Internal Revenue Service limits.

Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) — An account funded by your employer to help you pay for health care expenses. Although not

required, it is typically paired with a lower-cost, higher-deductible health plan (HDHP).

Rather than paying for a traditional copay health plan, you can save on premiums, and put the savings into your HSA or HRA. By doing this, you can choose how your money is spent. And when the need for health care services arises, CDHC encourages consumers to shop for care the same way you shop for a washing machine, a computer or a car — through research and talking with your doctor. When you are involved in your care, you will have more information about procedures, the quality of care you are receiving, and the associated costs.

To learn more about consumer-directed health care and the plans that accompany it, try searching out some informational websites. Sites like Wellmark.com/WhatMatters are a great place to start to learn more about how you can start taking charge of your health care.

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