Open Enrollment for CY2015
October 15 – November 14

Tips for Successful Navigation this Enrollment Season

✓ Take an active role

The good news is employers are taking steps to make enrollment quicker and easier. "Many companies are designing the process so it is similar to an online retail shopping experience, where you can access decision support tools and other resources that can help you narrow down your choices and weigh them against your specific needs," said Joann Hall Swenson, health engagement leader at Aon Hewitt. "Employers are also stepping up their efforts to clearly communicate what is changing from previous years, using a variety of communication methods. Make sure to take advantage of the resources your employer provides, and use the tools available so you can make decisions that are right for you."

✓ Assess you and your dependents' health care needs

Understanding your past needs and estimating your future needs will help you determine what adjustments you may need to make in your benefits selections for 2015. Start by reviewing how much you have spent in the past year out-of-pocket, the costs of your regular prescriptions and the number of doctor visits you have had. Most health plans provide access to past medical and dental claims that can help you calculate last year's costs and estimate what your future costs might look like. If you are participating in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA), reevaluate your contribution levels based on your actual and anticipated expenses for 2015. It is also important to think about any life changes that may impact your decisions. Did you or a family member develop a new medical condition that may impact your health care expenses? Did you or do you expect to add to your family?

✓ Evaluate your plan's provider network

Over the past few years, there have been many changes taking place in the provider community, including doctor's groups joining together and hospitals and health systems re-contracting with insurers. As a result, your health plan options may include vastly different combinations of doctors and hospitals than in the past. Most employers and health plans offer a number of tools and resources that can help you assess the cost impact and quality of different providers as you make your enrollment decisions.

✓ Determine the best source of coverage for your dependents

If your spouse, partner or adult children have access to health coverage elsewhere, including through their employer, it may be more cost effective for them to enroll in this coverage instead of being covered by you. Carefully review and compare these plans to ensure you are choosing the coverage you need at the most favorable cost.

✓ Take advantage of health and wellness programs

Many employers offer a wide range of health and wellness programs, such as health assessments, weight loss programs and health coaching, to help you get and stay healthy. Taking part in these programs will help you understand your current health status, and you might even be able to take advantage of a financial incentive from your employer for doing so.

✓ Understand how your employer coverage works in comparison to ACA (Affordable Care Act) Marketplaces

2015 will be the second year of coverage available to Americans through the Marketplaces, commonly referred to as "public exchanges." In most cases, individuals with coverage through their employer will not be eligible for federal tax credits for purchase of insurance through the Marketplaces. You can visit www.healthcare.gov to learn more about the Marketplaces.

✓ Take a holistic view of health and financial wellness

As you assess your health plan options for 2015, it is important to look holistically at your health and financial wellbeing, including health care, income protection (e.g., life and disability insurance) and retirement planning. Does your spending reflect your needs and priorities? For example, if you are not contributing to your 401(k) plan, now may be the time to start. Beginning to save earlier in your career helps to ensure you are on track to meet your long-term savings goals.