

A Little Mistake That Cost a Family Thousands of Dollars

Will This Happen To You?

The Role of the Independent Insurance Broker--

IT TAKES AN EXPERT!

- *Health Insurance and YOUR Hard Earned Dollars*
- *Avoid the Pitfalls and Mistakes in Buying Insurance*
 - *Obtaining the Very BEST Value*



©2008-Elite Benefits of America, Arthur Zemar. All rights reserved. No portion of this report may be copied or sold without written permission of the author.

Introduction

Obtaining health insurance used to be a right of passage. When you finished school you got your first job and on day one you signed up for your employer's health insurance policy. Working and health insurance went together like lunch hours and company picnics. Health insurance, like so many things today, has changed a great deal and things are not nearly as simple as they once were. Health insurance issues, rising health care costs, and the crisis of millions of uninsured citizens are making headlines every day. But now that the health insurance picture is so different, the question becomes, "just how do I go about getting insurance?"

It may seem that there are more questions than answers but there are incredibly valuable resources out there to make getting health insurance a lot easier. *The key is to tap into these resources and work the system to your advantage. Finding the right person to help navigate a complex system and provide the expertise can make all the difference.*

It takes an Expert!

An expert provides:

- *Guidance and direction*
- *Consumer education*
- *Consumer confidence*
- *Independence*
- *Flexibility*
- *The right mix of premiums and deductibles*
- *Quality*
- *Recommendations of the Best Value*

The difference between an insurance agent and an insurance broker is an important distinction. Knowing the difference can save you time, money, and peace of mind.

Insurance agents are termed "captive agents" because they represent only one insurance company and are employees of that company. Even though some claim they're independent, they have one primary focus. That focus is to represent that specific insurance carrier exclusively. The same is true of working with a Ford dealer, a Chevy dealer, or a Nissan dealer.

Many of the largest and best known insurance companies are captive agencies. One sure way to determine the difference between an independent agent and a captive agent is simply to ask for and look at a business card. If the agent presents a business card with an insurance company name or logo on it then you know that they are, indeed, a captive agent.

Independent agents, also termed "brokers" are free to represent many insurance carriers. As a broker, they have the freedom to move within the system and find the right combination of coverage, deductibles, and premiums to meet your own unique needs. Thereby putting together the right policy for you. *They have spent years building a body of expertise and knowledge in the insurance field and, while having relationships with many carriers, are not employees or obligated to any one particular company. Your insurance broker is also your insurance expert, with a wealth of resources and knowledge at their disposal.*

When you were a student and faced a difficult challenge you consulted a teacher or professor who was an expert in their field. Tapping into that expert's experience and ability allowed you to complete your task and arrive at valid conclusions. At times when you have complex questions about legal issues, it is obvious that a lawyer is the kind of expert to consult to resolve problems and save money. Lastly, when we have questions about our health the first place you go to is a physician. Thus, when faced with the overwhelming task of securing insurance coverage, what better place to go than to an insurance expert?

A health insurance expert has spent years interacting with a wide variety of carriers. They have observed and participated in the many changes in the market and seen how carriers respond to this

dynamic market. Which carriers offer the right combination of premiums, deductibles, and coverage to meet your needs? But there is more to understand than just the market. The health care needs of the general public are also changing. *Your independent insurance expert has also followed the advancing medical technology that makes up to date and progressive health insurance a top priority for clients.*

A captive agent who is the exclusive representative of a specific carrier has a limited view of benefits within the narrow scope of the products they offer. The information they have to work with regarding advances frequently is simply the sales data provided to them by their employing agency. *Independence breeds flexibility in both covered benefits and the products that offer them.*

There are a vast amount of choices in the world of insurance coverage and these choices can be overwhelming. The great benefit of an independent insurance broker is that they can sift through all the choices and options, weighing each against the specific needs you have outlined, and make a sound recommendation. Your independent insurance broker has the years of experience and knowledge of the industry to navigate the sea of options and arrive at the proper recommendation for you.

A health insurance expert also provides the education you need to make that informed choice. The insurance market is a complex and intricate system, with implications far beyond that signature on the dotted line. Mistakes can mean disaster and the situation is ripe for failure when you don't have the information you need to evaluate plans. *Insurance, like many product, does not exist in a vacuum.*

A wide variety of factors influence the cost and availability of insurance coverage. We are more aware of the financial market's ability to influence health care and insurance coverage than ever before. In today's troubled economy, choosing a strong carrier with the financial resources to assure future coverage is vital.

Equally important is our government's role in the insurance arena. Insurance carriers are subject to strict regulation by the State and Federal government. Your insurance expert monitors regulations constantly and can weigh legislation and its impact on individual carriers and the market in general. *One type of insurance coverage we may assume has always been available owes its existence to Federal legislation—COBRA. While COBRA is not always the best alternative as you may develop a long term condition and could possibly find yourself uninsured and without options when your COBRA coverage expires. It is also a very expensive option and you should carefully consider all avenues. But it was only when the Federal government stepped in that Americans were covered when leaving or changing jobs. This is just one example of public regulation and its profound impact on the insurance industry. And one of the first groups to measure this impact was independent insurance brokers.*

The impact of an independent body in the insurance industry also forces the industry itself to strive for improved services. With increased competition from consumers fueled with the data provided by their insurance broker brings the element of selection and choice into the marketplace. Carriers must, in order to secure their place in the market, improve their offerings. In a captive agency with captive agents, a company can keep their products static and still show a healthy profit. *But, with more employers turning away from sponsored health insurance, workers seeking private coverage, and independent brokers insuring a healthy, vital, and competitive marketplace, insurance companies may have to make changes to business as usual.*

In every industry where there is a dynamic and vital seller-neutral force, that industry has been stimulated and energized. In the travel industry, Internet sites like Expedia and Travelocity have forced related markets such as airlines, hotels, and car rental companies to become more consumer responsive. *True, the insurance industry has been slow to respond, but with the growth of state sponsored plans and continued Federal scrutiny; carriers*

may be forced to focus their efforts on their public image and more responsive products. As these changes take place, it is the independent insurance brokers that will help American consumers navigate this industry in flux.

*In conclusion, it is hard to argue with the many benefits and advantages of consulting an insurance expert. You may wonder why so many consumers are still attracted to captive agents. Much of the reason is because captive agents and captive insurance companies are part of a tradition, as much as employer-sponsored health insurance. When you want a Buick, you go to a Buick dealer. Many people don't know that there are alternatives. It is the mission of insurance brokers to share their expertise and educate consumers on the multitude of options open to them. More and more insurance brokers are joining speakers bureaus, authoring articles, and reaching out to Americans in order to bring their message to the people they strive to serve. *The independent insurance industry is very much a consumer driven force. And like every departure from the traditional way we do business, it takes a great deal of education, a lot of courage, and a true commitment to serve in order to change the landscape of such an established industry.**

With the uncertainty of our economy, we are all looking for answers that will give us security and stability. Now is the time to consult an Independent Insurance Broker and find those ways to protect not just our assets, but the health and well-being of ourselves and our loved ones. These issues have never been more critical and the answers you're looking for are out there. You just need an EXPERT to access the information, evaluate options, and make the very best recommendation for the safety, security, and stability of your health care coverage.

Elite Benefits of America
www.EliteBenefits.net
Toll Free 888-535-3006

©2008-Elite Benefits of America, Arthur Zemar. All rights reserved. No portion of this report may be copied or sold without written permission of the author.