

Avoid Costly Health Insurance Mistakes

Use this Checklist

By Beth Boone

Shop smarter and avoid health insurance scams with this handy-dandy checklist. Get answers to these questions before buying. A licensed and certified agent will be able to answer each of these questions regarding health insurance. And, if it looks “too good to be true,” it probably is.

Regulation

- Is this insurance? Or is it a discount card, health sharing ministry, or other non-insurance product?
- How long does this plan last? Do I have the right to renew it if I want to?
- Who regulates this plan or product? Who would I complain to if I have a problem?

Coverages

- Does it cover preexisting health conditions, like diabetes and high blood pressure?
- Does it pay if I go to the Emergency Room?
- Are hospital stays covered?
- What does the plan NOT cover, like pregnancy or mental health?
- Do I get drug coverage with this plan? Does it cover the drugs I take?
- Does the plan limit how many times I can see a doctor?
- Is lab work covered?
- When would coverage begin? Is there a waiting period?
- Will the plan cover my family?

Costs

- Can I get a Marketplace subsidy to help pay for this plan?
- Is there a limit to how much I may have to pay for covered medical care?
- How much is the deductible?
- What are the copays?
- Will I pay a percentage of the cost for certain services?
- Does the plan pay my medical providers? Or does it pay me, and I pay the medical bills?

Doctors

- Do I have to use doctors, hospitals, and urgent care centers in my network, or can I use any that I want?
- Do I have to ask the plan before I can see a specialist?
- Can I check to see if my current doctor is in network with this plan?

Avoid Scams

Here are some warning signs that you might want to move on to another company.

- The agent or salesperson cannot answer basic questions about the plan.
- You feel pressured to decide right away. No one can promise you a special deal.
- A price that is much lower than other companies you've checked with probably means the plan has fewer benefits and more limits.
- You get a call or email from a company or person you didn't contact first.

Adapted from the Texas Department of Insurance web site: <https://www.tdi.texas.gov/consumer/health-insurance-shopping-guide.html>

This article is for information only and should not be considered a recommendation. Talk with a licensed Health Insurance Professional about your specific circumstances. For more information you can go to The Texas Department of Insurance.