



“Alternative Benefits” News

Brought to you by: Tom Buonanduci

HealthPlanSavings@Comcast.net • (603) 622-5700

www.ABSHealthPlans.com



Last Chance: ACA Enrollment Period Ending This Month (31st)

The annual open enrollment period for Affordable Care Act (ACA) health plans (for under age 65) is closing fast. And if you (or family/friends) want or need coverage, now's the time to act.

The health care coverage you choose is one of the most important decisions you make in your life. And the open enrollment period for the ACA ends January 31, 2017.

If you miss it, you won't be able to buy ACA coverage until late in 2017 for 2018 coverage.

In the meantime, you may find yourself facing fines for being uninsured: the penalty for not obtaining qualified health coverage is significant. The ACA penalty for 2017 remains at 2.5% of total household adjusted gross income. However, the flat fees (currently \$695 for adults and \$347.50 per child, capped at \$2,085 per family) will be adjusted for inflation next year.

If, however, in the event of major life changes eg. a job loss, marriage, etc. you may qualify to apply for coverage for up to 60 days after the qualifying event. In addition, you may enroll in the Children's Health Insurance Program or Medicaid at any time.

A note of caution: You will, of course, want a plan with the lowest copays, deductible, etc. as possible. However also be sure you review each plan carefully, paying particular attention to the insurer's available medical providers to make sure your physician is covered.

On November 1, 2016, the ACA website posted final rates on its rate-review section; however, navigating the ACA website can be difficult and time consuming. As well, many people have recently become concerned about the lack of choice of ACA health insurers in their particular geographical areas.

Contact your health insurance agent who can help you explore your options. He or may be able to suggest something you hadn't thought of. But do it now, before its too late! For Instant quotes, go to: www.ABSHealthPlans.com or call 622-5700 for help with quoting and enrollment, to make the process as easy as possible.

Don't let your Family/Friends Miss Annual “Open Enrollment” Opportunity



Be sure that your family, friends, and business associates don't miss Open Enrollment, and refer them to us for FREE quotes & help. Remember to have them mention your name & email address, as we send out a **gifts/gift card** for any referral(s) from current & former clients that we end up quoting. As always, thanks for keeping us in mind!!!

Life Changes May Mean Changes to Health Coverage

A job loss or other major life change can affect your health coverage. However, if you've had group health coverage from an employer with more than twenty employees or work for a state or local government, you can usually take advantage of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) to purchase your health coverage after a life change.

Under COBRA, you can continue to purchase coverage through your former employer's group health insurance for up to eighteen months after your job ends.

However, you'll pay a higher rate, so before you choose COBRA, consider alternatives.

One option: enroll for coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) within sixty days post-employment, or after a major life change like a divorce. The ACA option may be less expensive than COBRA, but there will be differences in coverage; for example, be sure to check whether your health professionals and costly medications are covered under the ACA plan you're considering.

Which option is best for you? Talk to your insurance agent before you make a decision. He or she may offer affordable alternatives you hadn't considered, including short-term options.

If you think you may be back to work shortly at a job with group health, a short-term policy may be just right for you. Effectively, it can be a stopgap solution as you await a longer-term option.

Life events create enough stress. Don't add to it. What to do about your health insurance is a critical decision that needs your full attention. But it's one best made with assistance from your insurance professional.

Watch What You Do, Buy, Play, Eat: Databases Know It All

"Every move you make. Every click you take. Every game you play. Every place you stay. They'll be watching you." *Bloomberg Businessweek*.

Science fiction? Sadly, not. According to David Gauvey Herbert, author of the *Bloomberg Businessweek* article referenced above, data fusion (also termed "data mining") is creating "a portrait of your life." As Herbert puts it, it feels, well, "creepy."

George Orwell forewarned us of data mining in his iconic 1949 novel, *1984*. In the book, "Big Brother" undertook mass surveillance in order to gain power over others. Now our thoughtfully supplied online profiles open up our lives to anyone who wants to know us. For many reasons, this is both good and not so good. Says a 2010 special report in the *Economist*, "A new kind of professional has emerged, the data scientist, who combines the skills of software programmer, statistician

and storyteller/artist to extract the nuggets of gold hidden under mountains of data."

Today just about every type of data imaginable can be mined. As noted in an infographic on rayli.net, this includes "...credit card transactions, stock market movements, national security, genome sequencing and clinical trials." And that's just scratching the surface.

Now, much of the focus of data mining is on getting to know us through our online profiles. Why? Mainly to sell to us. Points out bigdata-madesimple.com, "Data mining is mainly used today by companies with a strong consumer focus, to 'drill down' into their transactional data and determine pricing, customer preferences and product positioning, impact on sales, customer satisfaction and corporate profits."

ACA HEALTH INSURANCE OPEN ENROLLMENT RESOURCES

For instant quoting on all individual plans for 2017, and a user-friendly online application tool, click here www.ABSHealthPlans.com. Also, click 'Consumer Resources', then **Application/PDF Library** for other valuable information. For help, contact agent at **622-5700** or HealthPlanSavings@comcast.net.

Quick Quiz

Here is our quick quiz question of the month: Just email us at Email: HealthPlanSavings@comcast.net or call Ph: (603) 622-5700 for the answer.

What's the meaning of "Auld Lang Syne" in the New Year's Eve song?

Are You at Risk of 'Insurance Gaps' in 2017?

With many of you now having catastrophic plans & even higher deductibles, do you have enough insurance to meet your family's needs now, and in the future? Start out 2017 by finding out now.

If you don't, you are putting yourself at risk of serious financial trouble if something goes wrong with your health, your home, your job or your finances.

Whether it's an affordable supplemental accident policy, cancer or Hospitalization policy to go with your high deductible Health plan; a dental plan to help maintain your Dental health, so critical to your overall health or a Medicare Supplement if you are a Medicare beneficiary... there are affordable ways to help fill in your gaps in coverage.

We won't try to push you into buying insurance you don't need, and won't waste your time. We'll just give you the honest facts about your current insurance status.

Just give our office a call at Ph: (603) 622-5700 to discuss your insurance needs (no obligation).

Worth Reading

How Can I Overcome My Fear of Failure?

By Evan Asano
Lifehacker.com

If you started 2017 with a long list of resolutions, you may be terrified of failing at them. Relax. Some of the most successful people have fears. But true failure happens when we don't improve. Asano offers practical advice to overcome fear of failure. Understand why your fears scare you. Set small goals. Most important, seek to challenge yourself in all areas of your life. **More:** <http://tinyurl.com/Fears-Jan-1>

I'm a Doctor. If I Drop Food on the Kitchen Floor, I Still Eat It.

By Aaron E. Carroll
The New York Times

Cleaning the floor with a sponge is a waste; the sponge is likely dirtier than the floor. Pediatrics professor Aaron E. Carroll explains why he's stopped obeying the five-second rule (don't eat it if it's been on the floor for longer than five seconds.) There are spots around your home that are far dirtier, he says. Things get dirty, he writes, because people forget about them. Read this. Clean that sponge. But know that most of us are pretty much immune to germs by now. **More:** <http://tinyurl.com/Dirt-Jan-2>

The Top Idea in Your Mind

Paul Graham
paulgraham.com

Spend more time in the shower to determine what matters to you. That's often where people think about their top-of-mind topics. Graham, a programmer, writer, and investor, notes that what we think about most is often not what should be occupying our thoughts. Graham advises people to avoid thinking about money and disputes, which are the worst distractors—in or out of the shower. **More:** <http://tinyurl.com/Distractors-Jan-3>

Life Insurance Needs Change after Age Fifty

There's no specific age-related cutoff to help you decide when you'll need life insurance, but once you pass age fifty, your needs may change.

Here are a few things to consider:

What do you need insurance for? If you have a partner who is heavily dependent on your income, and few savings, you'll probably need life insurance.

What are the options? There are two types of life insurance: term and whole. A term policy provides life insurance for a fixed period of time, from one to thirty years; if you die when coverage is in effect, the policy pays the beneficiaries listed on your policy a

specific amount.

A whole life policy is permanent; assuming you pay the premiums, you will have coverage for your entire life.

Whole life policies may also have a savings feature, whereby the money that goes into your policy is invested, and you can borrow against this cash value.

How does it work? With both types of life insurance, you make monthly payments to an insurance company (which typically remain fixed for the life of the policy) in exchange for coverage.

Which type of life insurance is best for those over fifty? It depends. Term life costs less than whole life, and is

fine if you intend it to retire an expense, like a mortgage, that is expiring on a set date. Whole life, while it costs more, may be ideal if you have ongoing financial commitments. If your policy has a saving feature, you can build up your reserves.

Now or later? If you are relatively young, you may think you don't need to purchase life insurance now, but both whole and term policies get more expensive once you turn fifty. You may not even be able to get term life insurance after age sixty, meaning you may be forced to buy a more expensive whole life policy.

We Are What We Eat—and What We Read

Thanks to the adage, we know we are what we eat. But are we also what we read?

Maybe so. In a time when we often get our news in short sound bites and headlines via Facebook and Twitter, many are worried we're filling our minds with junk that dumbs us down and weakens our ability to think and speak critically.

A recent study, published by the *International Journal of Business Administration*, reports that what college students read—and how frequently they read it—affects the level of their own writing. Those who read literary fiction, nonfiction, and academic publications wrote at a higher level of sophistication than their peers who read genre fiction, like mystery novels. And by gorging on websites such as BuzzFeed and Reddit, we may be reducing our writing to the literary equivalent of fast food.

Instead, be conscious of the content you ingest; limit the consumption of Facebook and Tumblr and dedicate time each week to reading real literature.

Also, read carefully. The brain tends to want to skim. Focus on the meaning of what you're reading. Let's face it: none of us wants to be fast food—or write like it.

Completing your 2017 Enrollments & Renewal

If you have enrolled for Jan 1 coverage or are renewing, be sure that you have paid your January premium, and if not, contact your insurer's Member Services to find out the quickest way to get your payment made. Failure to receive payment could result in termination of coverage. Also, if you're getting subsidies and your household or estimated adjusted gross income for 2017 is expected to change for 2017, you should update your income your now to adjust your premiums for 2017 accordingly. Contact your agent for assistance.

Worth Quoting

This month, some famous quotes on the topic of personal growth:

There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered.

Nelson Mandela

We should not judge people by their peak of excellence, but by the distance they have traveled from the point where they started.

Henry Ward Beecher

A winner knows how much he still has to learn, even when he is considered an expert by others; a loser wants to be considered an expert by others before he has learned enough to know how little he knows.

Sydney J. Harris

We could never learn to be brave and patient if there were only joy in the world.

Helen Keller

Lighten up on yourself. No one is perfect. Gently accept your humanness.

Deborah Day



PRESRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID

HUDSON, NH
PERMIT NO. 88

Inside the Newsletter!

Last Chance: ACA Enrollment Period Ending This Month (31st)

Life Changes May Mean Changes to Health Coverage

Watch What You Do, Buy, Play, Eat: Databases Know It All And...

Life Insurance needs Change after 50

Alternative Benefits News

				1	8			9
		8			6			
	3	4	9	7	5			
	5	2	7				3	4
				9				
3	8				2	7	5	
			2	3	7	4	6	
			8			3		
7			1	5				

Sudoku instructions: Complete the 9×9 grid so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3×3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

Tom Buonanduci

Alternative Benefits News is brought to you free by:

Tom Buonanduci, Licensed Agent

Alternative Benefit Solutions*, LLC

PO Box 81, Hudson NH 03051

Ph: (603) 622-5700

Email: HealthPlanSavings@comcast.net

Website: www.ABSHealthPlans.com

NH License #0379354

*In Good standing with the Better Business Bureau since 2002

This newsletter and any information contained herein are intended for general informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal, financial or medical advice. The publisher takes great efforts to ensure the accuracy of information contained in this newsletter. However, we will not be responsible at any time for any errors or omissions or any damages, howsoever caused, that result from its use. Seek competent professional advice and/or legal counsel with respect to any matter discussed or published in this newsletter.