



Developing a Benefits Communication Program

The process of creating and delivering a manageable and effective benefit communication program at can be a time-consuming undertaking, but by following some helpful tips and best practices, you can streamline the success of your program.

Know what benefits your organization provides and how they work:

- Make an inventory of dates, contracts and other administrative information for all contracts and plans.
- Create or utilize a comparison of benefits features and costs for each plan you offer.
- Consider your benefits documents from varying perspectives, such as the company lawyer, a judge and jury, employees, employees' beneficiaries and the press.

Know how your employees feel about your benefit program:

- Ask them how they feel and let them know you are sincere in your desire to know and meet their needs.
- Analyze reports from your providers.
- Study actuarial and provider research.

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Understand benefits communication responsibilities and organize yourself:

- Develop a plan that includes required, as well as optional communications that may be helpful.
- Keep employees and beneficiaries informed of changes to their benefits, and explain confusing terms and features of the plans.

Prepare your benefits communication plan of action:

- Determine who will prepare your benefit communications and the costs involved.
- Construct a data sheet to be used for planning, preparing and delivering your communications.
- Designate responsibilities for the preparation of each communication. Be sure to consider both internal and external assistance.
- Communicating remotely with a doctor is a primary function of telemedicine. With this technology, doctors can reach patients in remote, rural and underserved areas where there might not be an available doctor or hospital. Through telemedicine, patients can access doctors for routine visits, emergency care or diagnostics from a specialist.

Sell your communication plan to your manager:

- Determine HR and other benefit staff productivity loss due to employee confusion about their benefits resulting from a lack of clear communication of benefit information.
- Set measurable objectives for how much money and time your communications will save.
- Present your communications plan and implementation schedule.
- Prioritize compliance with government regulations and clarification of complicated issues, procedures and terms.

Select, prepare and distribute communications to fit corporate objectives and employee needs:

- Target segments of employees who would profit most from specific features of a benefit by sending tailored communications.
- Decide what type of communication will be most appropriate for relaying messages to employees.
- Determine who will manage the production process of writing, editing and designing communications.

Evaluate the effectiveness of your benefits communications:

- Survey employees and provide feedback surveys.
- Establish and monitor indicators of behavior after communications are distributed.
- Revise your communications to meet realistic goals and expectations, your employees' needs, your communication plan objectives and your organization's requirements.