

ESSENTIALS BY DEBI & JIM BOWMAN

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Total Benefit Services

www.bowmanbenefits.com

The Power of Going On-line

Our core business is individual, senior and small group health insurance, but we provide many other types of benefits. The last newsletter announced our change to a “Total Benefit Services” company. This has been successfully accomplished. With this change we put in a [new web site](#) to help you and future clients with managing their health care. Visit www.bowmanbenefits.com

1. We provide links to the insurance companies, many different products and on-line forms.
2. Links to on-line PPO network directories.
3. We added a section to archive our past newsletters. You can even print them in Adobe PDF format.
4. There are links to several government agencies.
5. Where possible, links to on-line applications.
6. Company data (such as phone # and address) and email notification for service or information requests.

Since most of our new clients come from referrals, and with the added use of the internet, you can now direct them to the web site or to our email address.

Yes, we still take phone calls. If we are not available to answer the call, a message can be left. Yes, we promise to return the call by the next business day, and we mean it.

Future web site enhancements will be forthcoming. Some enhancements will be of the information variety and some will come from the insurance carriers.

IRS Announcement for Form 5500 filers

In an effort to reduce plan sponsor’s administrative burdens, on April 4, 2002 the IRS announced the immediate suspension of the Form 5500 with Schedule F reporting for cafeteria plans, educational assistance, and adoption assistance. This means no more filing, even if you failed or are late in filing as this applies to all plan years.

Managed Health Care

Since all individual health plans are sold with a PPO network and all group plans have either an HMO or PPO, it is very important that you know which doctors, hospitals, labs, treatment centers, minor emergency centers are in the network associated with your health plan.

You have a health plan with in-network benefits, which means using the network saves you on health costs. Using non-network doctors and facilities most likely means you will pay much more of the cost since there are higher deductibles and maximums for out of network usage.

We would recommend that you familiarize yourself with the network facilities near your home/work and which ones your doctors use. Knowing where you get the most health care benefit with the least cost means you are managing your health care.

Want More Lifetime Income

A 2002 PricewaterhouseCoopers study showed that variable annuities provide significantly more lifetime income than do a comparable mutual fund. This range is from 27.6% to 94.4% based on after-tax withdrawals. How can this be? It is the tax-deferral feature of annuities during the pre-withdrawal (ie. accumulation) phase. Taxes erode the effects of earnings. Plus, the death benefit feature of annuities can be very attractive along with the creditor protection offered to Texas policyholders.

GOING TO THE DENTIST

Men go the dentist significantly less than women do according to a CNN and Men's Health magazine study. Almost 33% of men DID NOT go to the dentist in the past year. Because of this, men have higher rates of periodontal disease, especially after age 55. In addition, more bacteria is allowed to cultivate in the mouth and permitted to enter into the body. This can have a negative effect on your internal organs, especially your heart.

Men, do you change the oil in your car more regularly that you have your teeth taken care of?

American Medical Security

For those insured or considering AMS here is some important information regarding how their rates are adjusted each year. AMS has annual individual membership rate increases. It is their practice to re-underwrite renewals based on the member's claims experience during the prior year. This means those who have large claims will experience higher rate increases than those who do not. Healthier people are rewarded with lower premiums.

It does not mean that AMS can cancel a member with large claims. As long as the premium is paid, the policy remains in force.

Heart Attacks

Men and women have differences when it comes to a heart attack according to Rosemary Robertson, M.D., FACC, immediate past president of the American Heart Association.

Men usually feel uncomfortable pressure or pain in the center of the chest, or pain spreading to the neck or arms. Women usually feel shortness of breath, unexpected fatigue, cold sweats or dizziness.

Men are more likely to go to the hospital at the request of the spouse. Women are more likely to wait for symptoms to go away rather than get help.

Men are more likely to survive a heart attack. Since women might not recognize symptoms, they delay seeking care and are likely to die within a few weeks of a heart attack.

She states "If people come to the hospital early in a heart attack, we can nearly make it disappear. The earlier you come in, the more heart muscle you save." Call 911 if you think you are having a heart attack.

How to Survive a Heart Attack when Alone

What if you cannot call 911? Here is what Rochester General Hospital says in their Health Cares newsletter.

Without help, the person whose heart stops beating properly and who begins to feel faint, has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness. Victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough, and the cough must be deep and prolonged.

Deep breaths and a cough must be repeated about every 2 seconds without let up until help arrives or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again.

Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps regain normal rhythm.

The two things most dear to each person are their faith and their health.

Coach K of Duke University June 2002

Back-up Parents

Here is a small excerpt of an article written by a local Estate Planning Attorney, Michael Wald, regarding how the legal system treats your children should both parents of the child die.

When one parent dies, by default, the surviving parent will be the legal guardian. He recommends you legally appoint the guardians for your children for the case where there would not be a surviving parent. If not, a court will make the appointment for you. He suggests getting the permission of the appointee(s) and even appointing alternates just in case the first appointees cannot serve.

He adds, you should legally appoint inheritance managers for you children or else the court will make the appointment for you. He suggests, the guardian would most likely be appointed the inheritance manager by the court. Would you want the inheritance you intended for your children to be entrusted to an unknown guardian?

Not legally naming the guardian and inheritance manager, leaves the future of your children in unknown hands.

Blood Donations

Debi and Jim just completed our first year of blood donations. So far Debi has given 4 pints and Jim 5 pints. Donations are allowed every 56 days (2 months), so please help out your by giving of this precious supply and put a little bit Texas in someone who needs it.

Carter Blood Care is now experiencing a shortage in donated blood for the North Texas area. If you would like to donate, call to schedule a time (about 30-45 relaxing minutes). There are 12 locations in the Metroplex, so one is likely near you. Call 1-800-366-2834 to get the address near you or go to carterbloodcare.org.

LTC Legislative Changes for July 2002

Texas regulations concerning Long Term Care policies sold after July 1, 2002 have been updated. Insurers will now be required to make rate disclosures to a consumer applying for coverage. The disclosures must include the premium rate schedule, a 10-year history of premium rate increases on the applicable policy or similar policies in Texas, a notice that the policy may be subject to rate increases in the future, and an explanation of the consumer's options in the event of a future premium increase. Also, the insurer must provide a 45 notice in advance of any rate change.

Indexed Annuities

After the past 2 years of volatile stock markets and in most cases, decreased portfolio value, those who have had an Indexed Annuity have not lost anything, rather they still have their peak account value. Plus, with no down side risk, their principle and earnings intact, these people have not experienced the emotions of a down market.

These same people have seen their annuity gain in value in rising market years. Although not appropriate for an entire portfolio, these make excellent anchors with which to balance equity investments. You owe it to visit with us and go over how an Indexed Annuity can help your portfolio perform better and help preserve earnings.

After all, it is not only what you make, it is also what you can retain that counts.

You do not need large balances to start one of these. You can set up monthly payments to add to your balance. These can be either set up as a qualified or non-qualified account. Plus, the added value of tax-deferral which annuities offer can increase your account accumulation, because annual income taxation erodes earnings.

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Do It Anyway!

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered; Forgive them anyway.
If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; Be kind anyway.
If you are successful, you will win some false friends and true enemies; Succeed anyway.
If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; Be honest and frank anyway.
What you spent years building, someone could destroy overnight; Build anyway.
If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; Be happy anyway.
The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; Do good anyway.
Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; Give the world the best you have anyway.
You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God; It was never between you and them anyway.

Mother Teresa

Summer 2002 Class Schedule

July 15 *Plano Senior Center*
10-11:30am Class comparing LTC funding and coverage options.

Listen to Jim on the radio Sunday evening July 14th. He will be discussing "The Effects of Drug Use and Health Insurance". Airtime is 7:30pm to 8:00pm on 570am KLIF talk radio.

This newsletter intends to offer factual and up-to-date information on the subjects discussed, but should not be regarded as a complete analysis of these subjects. Professional advisors should be consulted before implementing any option presented. It is meant for educational use only.