

## Greetings!

from Paula Colling,  
VP Business Development Officer

Not long ago, many of you received a call from me asking for your feedback relating to a few items. Hitting the highlights, here's what I asked:

- How do you feel about the quality of service and relevance of materials provided by Blackhawk?
- Do you currently utilize the learning tools and resources we provide, and do you know how to contact us for additional information?
- Do you think of us as a "go-to" partner for customized HSA materials from the beginning of the process of introducing high deductible coverage options all the way through enrollment?

Your answers were extremely helpful, and content in the e-newsletter you are reading right now is one of the outcomes! Items we now understand include:

- Overall, you value our level of personal service and you find our educational and enrollment materials relevant. Which leads to bullet # 2...
- There has been a big uptick in utilization of customized power points and hand-outs, but we'd love to hear from you before each group enrollment with a quick heads-up to ensure a seamless transition of paperwork and continuation of service.
- Although we are more than happy to provide FREE ONSITE ENROLLMENT service whether we are there in person or by teleconference, many of you still feel that you have to handle the HSA presentation portion of an employee meeting.

In answer to these answers, we are doing a little tweaking to our agent communications, and to the materials we provide for you, our valued agents. In the months to come, look to this e-newsletter quarterly, but also for special targeted updates

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## Consumer Driven Plans Growing Steps to understanding the process

Trends in the adoption of Consumer Driven Plans indicate growing acceptance of the model – but there is still a lot of work to do. The question -- what can we, as trusted partners/insurance and banking professionals do to assist our clients with this important decision?



Education is certainly the key – after all, the more a person understands the plans available to them, and the value of each option, the more likely they are to choose the right plan for their situation. In my experience, more often than not they will choose the CDHP because they see the benefit of controlling their own dollars and making their own decisions. That being said, I've seen this process in action and would offer that a deeper dive into the emotions surrounding this decision are key to having the educational component make an impact, rather than having it fall on deaf ears.

Imagine you are an employee of XYZ company and in your annual benefit meeting. Forms abound, and

brochures touting wellness, dental, PPO, HSA, FSA and HMO options litter the break room table in front of you. What you know for certain is that there will be an increase in what's taken out of your check, because that's what happens every time. You know there will be some references to rates, and to the economy, but mostly, you wish they'd just get this all over with and you could sign the forms and be done.

Add to this, both your boss and the insurance agent who brought that new HSA option seemed to be almost apologizing for offering it to you. Sounds like the company will save a lot of money if you choose it, but what's in it for you? You have no idea how to compare one plan to the other, and what about your spouse's paperwork from their company? How do you even ask a question, when you don't know where to start or what half of this stuff means? Overwhelming? Absolutely. Engaging? Nope. Makes sticking with the option that you've always taken and "keeping it simple" seem pretty attractive.

So, let's start from the end-user perspective. You are not an insurance professional. You do not work in HR, and you are here on your break with everything but this on your mind right now. Where is the value? I've seen the next three basic steps work miracles on groups that no one thought would get over 10% participation the first time out with a CDHP.

**First:** Understanding terminology is essential. PPO, FSA, HSA, election, and co-insurance (believe it or not) are probably a foreign language to your audience. Handing out and going over

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regarding regulations and news related to HSAs. Also, don't be surprised to find new HSA teaching tools & tips coming your way, as well as opportunities for you to link with us on our website. It's all good, and it's all designed to strengthen our relationship and generate business for all of us!

Thanks so much for your continued use of Blackhawk; we greatly appreciate your business!

**Agent APPRECIATION!**



Since the last Fall/Winter edition, we have had tremendous growth in our HSA portfolio. This of course is due in no small part to you, our valued agents! Soon our team will be in the midst of sending out commissions and letters to all agents who have agreements with us. This is great news for those receiving the money, but possibly a little disappointing if you are reading this piece but don't have that agent agreement signed yet. We love to get referrals, we love to pay for them too, but we can't pay you if you don't sign up! Please take a moment to fill out an agreement, that way the next time we send out those commission statements your name will appear – hopefully with a dollar sign and a few zeros too. To get a copy of the agreement, all you have to do is email me, Paula at [pcolling@blackhawkbank.com](mailto:pcolling@blackhawkbank.com). I will send you the agreement as an attachment, and as soon as we get it back you will become part of our growing list of agents. Thanks very much and I hope to see many of your emails soon!

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a simple “cheat sheet” of definitions at the top of the meeting, and acknowledge that there is a lot of jargon provides you both an icebreaking and educational moment.

**Second:** Don't, under any circumstances, refer to the past or other insurance option with the lower deductible as a more “rich” plan. This conjures ideas that somehow something of value is being taken from the employees – leaving the door wide open for the “us vs. them” thinking that can kill a successful transition to a CDHP.

**Third:** Make sure that the group in question has the opportunity to do the math and compare options. This will require about 15 minutes of their time, but the investment of these few minutes may save them hundreds (if not thousands) of dollars in the long run. You are their advocate, leading them through this process, and you have to tell them this. I typically use the example of “Let's Make A Deal.” You have 2 curtains. Behind one is a goat, the other hides a new car. Which one do you pick? Moving the curtain tells the tale. Until they move that curtain by doing that math, they will not know. It's no fun to find out months too late that you chose the goat.



**Here are a few good resources for webinars related to pertinent topics:**

- Bankers Online training webinars, covering all the regs and rules surrounding HSAs. Find it and other useful topics at [www.BankersOnline.com](http://www.BankersOnline.com) <<http://www.BankersOnline.com>>
- [www.nahu.org](http://www.nahu.org) <<http://www.nahu.org>> for online training, webinars, and certification
- [www.benefitslink.com](http://www.benefitslink.com) <<http://www.benefitslink.com>> for webinars covering HSAs, IRAs, and IRS guidance
- [www.galen.org](http://www.galen.org) <<http://www.galen.org>> for comprehensive coverage of all issues related to Health Care; up to date blogs regarding the Health Care Summit, pending legislation, and educational tools you can use.

**WHAT'S COMING UP IN THE NEXT ISSUE:**  
**Topics for the next issue will be:**

- A letter from our President, Rick Bastian
- Updates on the Health Care Summit in Washington
- Agent testimonials
- A healthy Summer recipe or two / Wellness tips!

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