

A healthy understanding

Know the changes resulting from health care reform before making annual enrollment decisions

By Jill Godschall

This article is part of a series to help Boeing employees and their families understand how changes in health care may affect them in 2011 and beyond.

Several provisions of the new health care law will take effect Jan. 1, 2011. During annual enrollment, which takes place Nov. 4 through Dec. 3, employees will see how these changes may affect their benefits. Among the changes detailed in the enrollment materials sent to employees' homes:

- **Change in eligibility provisions for adult children.** Employees' biological children, adopted children or stepchildren may now be covered until the end of the month in which they turn 26. They need not be dependent on the employee for support, live with the employee, be a student or be unmarried, provided, in most cases, that they are not eligible for coverage through their own employer. This change applies to medical, dental and supplemental life insurance, as well as accidental death and dismemberment plans. Because of the new eligibility provisions, children who were previously dropped from coverage after reaching the age limit may be eligible for coverage under Boeing plans again. Coverage rules for other children are described in the enrollment materials.
- **Removal of lifetime maximum.** The most that a health plan will pay in benefits during an individual's lifetime has been eliminated. If an employee or a dependent previously reached the lifetime maximum under a Boeing medical plan, he or she may now re-enroll in that plan.
- **Removal of annual maximums on certain benefits.** Boeing medical plans no longer have an annual limit on preventive care.
- **Changes in health savings accounts.** The PPO+Account is the only Boeing medical plan with a health savings account. Employees can pay their medical bills with the tax-free money or save it for future expenses—even in retirement, because the

balance in a health savings account automatically rolls over at the end of each year. Effective Jan. 1, 2011, expenses for over-the-counter medications (with the exception of insulin) won't be reimbursable without a prescription from a physician. In addition, penalties will increase for withdrawals from a health savings account if funds aren't used for qualified medical expenses.

- **Changes in flexible spending accounts.** By contributing to a flexible spending account, employees can pay for eligible health care expenses using tax-free money. As with the health savings account, effective Jan. 1, 2011, expenses for over-the-counter medications (with the exception of insulin) won't be reimbursable without a prescription from a physician. Employees should carefully estimate their 2011 health care expenses because any money left in a flexible spending account at the end of the year is forfeited, as required by law.

Boeing continues to work with the government to get clarification on other provisions of the new law. As guidance is provided, Boeing will comply by applying any additional changes to its benefit plans. For late-breaking changes during enrollment, go online to the Healthy Decisions website via your enrollment link in Tasks and Reminders on the Boeing TotalAccess home page.

Other changes will also apply, including changes in the deductible, copayments and coinsurance in various nonunion plans. In addition, all of the medical plans administered by Regence Blue Shield will transition to BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois. As a result, employees will receive new ID cards and will go through TotalAccess to contact a new customer service center; the network of providers will remain the same, since both groups are part of the "Blues" organization.

In the past, almost half of all Boeing employees have not enrolled and their benefits default to prior selections. However, benefit provisions in many of the plans will change next year, so it's important to make sure the plan that made sense in 2010 is still the best fit for 2011. ■

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Tools and resources help employees choose well

Employees need to understand their benefits to make informed choices for 2011. Boeing provides an array of tools on the Your Benefits Resources website so employees can:

- View a side-by-side comparison of 2011 medical plan choices.
- Locate network doctors and hospitals, which offer services at negotiated rates.

- See health care claims to date, including the expenses the employee paid last year and year-to-date.
- Determine which plan offers the best value based on the employee's personal situation.
- Calculate how much a flexible spending account can help save on eligible expenses in 2011.