

Quarterly G.A.B.

General Agency Benefits

525 East Broadway ♦ Mt. Pleasant ♦ 800.589.6982

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Your General Agency Benefits Department

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Office Hours:

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Monday– Friday

Dedicated Employee Benefit Department

The Quarterly G.A.B. is being brought to you by the Employee Benefits Department of the General Agency Company of Mt. Pleasant.

This newsletter will be provided every quarter via email or mail. The information provided will include Government reforms, ways to lower costs, coverage options, new trends among group plan designs along with other valuable information to help you administer your employee benefits.

As an independent agency we represent many carriers. Some of the companies we

represent include Blue Cross Blue Shield, Assurant, Aetna, Humana, Aflac, and numerous others.

General Agency Co was established in 1915 and is often regarded as one of Central Michigan's largest independent agencies. We have grown to 45 employees servicing business and personal insurance customers. Our Employee Benefits department has 6 licensed agents and support staff providing group insurance for more than 250 employers and insuring individuals and families amounting to over 3,000 persons. Group medical, group life,

group disability, Aflac, also HSA administration and on line access to national human resource and employee benefit trends are some examples of the benefits our department offers.

We can provide you with answers to your questions, coverage and options accurately and timely. Feel free to contact us at 1-800-589-6982 for more information and with any questions you may have.



Medicare Certificates of Creditable Coverage Are you ready for November 14th?

We want to remind all employers who offer drug plans providing Medicare coverage, they must comply with the certificate of creditable notice requirement. The law requires these notices to be mailed by November 14th of each year. Do you have your notice ready?

Here is some background of the reasoning behind these notices. To avoid adverse selection in the Medicare Part D drug benefit, eligible individuals pay a permanently increased Medicare Part D premium if they do not enroll in Part D when first eligible. However, if the individual had

“creditable coverage” for prescription drugs under another drug plan the premium increase is waived. To ensure potential Part D enrollees know whether they have creditable coverage, Medicare Part D requires that all drug plans provide Medicare beneficiaries “certificates of creditable coverage”.

Under the Part D regulations, the notice of creditable coverage disclosure must be provided to Part D eligible individuals, at a minimum, at the following times:
1) Prior to an individual's initial enrollment period for Part D;

2) Prior to the effective date of enrollment in the entity's coverage, and upon any change in creditable status;
3) Prior to the commencement of the Part D Annual Coordinated Election Period (ACEP) which begins on November 15th of each year; and
4) Upon request by the individual.

We are here to help you comply with this law. If you do not have your certificate ready or have any questions, feel free to contact our Employee Benefits Division.

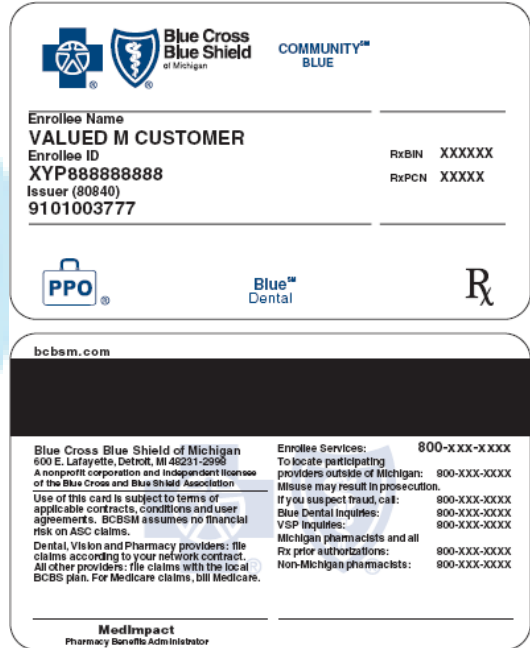
Coming Soon from Blue Cross Blue Shield

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan is redesigning their ID cards to meet their updated mandates.

The purpose of the redesign is to give all Blue Cross ID cards a similar look and feel so they are easier to use wherever presented. Although the cards will look different, it is important for you to know that the card redesign will not impact your plan or your benefits. Some of the changes include, a subscriber id number (that will be located on the front of the card), the sub-

scriber's group number will be removed from the card and a magnetic strip will be added to the back of the card. The strip will include the issuer ID number, contract number including the alpha-prefix, as well as the subscribers name and date of birth.

The image to the right is an example of what your new ID card will look like. Please contact our office with any questions you may have regarding the new cards.



Think about this...

In the last 10 minutes, 390 American's became disabled; National Safety Council, Injury Facts

In the home, a fatal injury occurs every 16 minutes and a disabling injury every four seconds; National Safety Council, Injury Facts

There is a death caused by a motor vehicle crash every 12 minutes; there is a disabling injury every 13 seconds. National Safety Council, Injury Facts

Nobody wants to think about it, but you must take steps to protect your family and your future from what might happen if you become disabled and can not work.

HSA/FSA/HRA how do they compare?

Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) and Health Care Reimbursement (HRAs) are optional accounts some employers choose to offer in conjunction with health insurance coverage. The common thread between these accounts is that they all provide tax advantages and a means for employees to control a portion of their health care dollars.

Many employers are adopting these programs to help offset the rising cost of health care.

If you are confused by these latest plan options or would like to learn more, please feel free to contact our office.

Without Insurance there is no Assurance!!

Did you know...

The uninsured can always get care if they really need it.

Not true. Unfortunately uninsured people delay getting care, live with illnesses longer and even die younger than those with health insurance.

There is no economic risk to going without health insurance.

Not true. Not having health insurance is a leading cause of personal bankruptcy because most families cannot afford to pay for their medical care out of pocket.

The uninsured are mostly young people.

Not true. 3 out of 4 uninsured adults are over the age of 25

The uninsured do not have to pay before services are rendered.

Not true. The uninsured are increasingly paying "up front" before services can be rendered. When they are unable to pay the full medical bill in cash at the time of service, they can be turned away, except in life threatening circumstances.