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# BeneFacts

A publication of Educators Mutual Insurance Association • [educatorsmutual.com](http://educatorsmutual.com)

## Member Focus

### **Controlling insurance costs and getting the most from your benefits**

On the surface, it may seem that it would be nice if your health plan could just pay every claim in full, but the economic reality is that if we did that, none of us could afford the premiums. Sometimes we forget that insurance was never intended to pay for every possible medical expense, but rather to help make the financial burden of illness or injury more manageable. Insurance is basically a pooling of risk. In its simplest form, all of the members make contributions, so that when one needs medical care, that individual can draw from those combined resources and not have to shoulder the entire burden him or herself. It's a balancing act; the more benefits you want, the more each person must contribute. When your employer chooses the benefit packages that it will offer, those decisions are based on which benefits will provide the most good for the group members, while still keeping the costs within reason.

It is ultimately your responsibility, as a member, to use your benefits in a way that will provide the maximum benefit for yourself and the group as a whole. The first step to taking that responsibility is to familiarize yourself with the requirements of your plan (e.g., participating providers, preauthorization, limitations, and exclusions). In order to do that, we strongly encourage you to read your Member Handbook and attend any open enrollment or other insurance meetings that your employer sponsors. Also, carefully review everything that you receive from Educators Mutual. We will not send out "junk mail." And finally, if you have questions, ask. Educators Mutual's customer service department is staffed with knowledgeable representatives, prepared to assist you.

Another significant way that you can help control costs—and increase the efficiency with which your claims are processed—is to ensure that your providers and Educators Mutual have accurate member, patient, and insurance plan information. For example, if your claim is denied because of an incorrect identification number, notify Educators Mutual and the provider of the correct information. If you don't, the next claim from that provider may very well come in wrong again. The same thing applies to changes in your enrollment information. Every time you notify Educators Mutual of a change, you should notify your providers, including your pharmacist, as well.

### **Educators Mutual's CEO announces retirement**

Educators Mutual's board of directors recently announced the upcoming retirement of the association's President and Chief Executive Officer, Andy Galano. Andy has led Educators Mutual through a period of tremendous challenges, transformation, and growth. Under Andy's leadership, members' equity has nearly doubled; customer satisfaction has increased in every category; enrollment in Educators dental and vision plans has more than doubled; relationships with partners have been strengthened; and Educators Mutual has twice been named Best of State in Insurance. The future of the association is extremely positive. With the foundation that Andy has laid, and the outstanding people and processes that are now in place, Educators Mutual is well positioned for the future.

Board chair, Gary Harmer, said, "While Andy will be tough to replace, we knew this day would come and have done everything necessary to assure a smooth transition. A CEO Search Committee has been formed, and a careful and thorough national search will be conducted to find a new chief executive. We anticipate having a new leader in place by second or third quarter 2010."

The board and staff of Educators Mutual wish Andy the very best in his retirement, and we pledge to continue his legacy of outstanding service to our members and partners.

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## Administrative Focus

### Have you got your employees covered?

It is essential that you reconcile your monthly billing statement with your employee benefit records each month. Check the employee list of benefits for additions and cancellations. Do you have any new hires, terminations, or retirees? Do the premiums on your bill match the benefits your employees have selected? Taking a few minutes to reconcile your bill each month can help avoid some serious problems for you and your employees; for example:

- 1. An employee receives medical or dental services believing he or she has insurance coverage, only to have the claims denied because the employee was never enrolled and no premiums have been paid on his or her behalf.*
- 2. Even worse, if you are deducting the employee portion of the premium from payroll, but not forwarding it to Educators Mutual, you may have some legal liabilities.*
- 3. An employee retires or otherwise terminates employment, but Educators Mutual is not notified, and so you keep paying premiums after the terminated employee is no longer eligible for coverage.*
- 4. If Educators Mutual is the COBRA administrator for your plan, proper COBRA notices may not be sent, again leading to possible legal liabilities for you, as the employer.*

According to the terms of your health plan, Educators Mutual must be notified within 31 days whenever there is a change in a covered person's situation that may affect that person's enrollment eligibility or status. Reconciling your bill each month is one way to confirm that is happening and to ensure that your employees have the benefits expected and you are paying the correct amount.

If you have questions about your bill, call the enrollment department at 801-262-7475 or toll free at 800-662-5851.

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