

Keeping Health Care Affordable For Workers And Their Families

SEEING YOUR WAY TO LOWER VISION CARE COSTS



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Starting in January 2016, VSP is lowering its administration costs for HCCMCA member health plans that use the vision care provider. The administrative fee plans pay to VSP will decrease by 0.5%.

“This is the direct result of an increase in the number of covered lives now enrolled in VSP through HCCMCA. It’s a great example of the ‘strength in numbers’ that Coalition membership delivers,” said Randy Scott, HCCMCA’s Northwest membership representative. The administrative fee will drop another 0.5% at 25,000 members.

With 72 million members—more than 20,000 of them covered by HCCMCA member health plans—VSP is the nation’s largest vision care provider. It offers more than 71,000 provider access points nationwide, including 96

in Alaska and nearly 2,900 throughout the Pacific Northwest. These providers discount their usual retail prices for people enrolled in a VSP plan. In addition to eye exams, eyewear and contact lenses, VSP’s Eye Health Management program incorporates a wellness component designed to identify conditions like diabetes, high cholesterol and hypertension that can affect eyesight if not treated.

VSP has been HCCMCA’s exclusive vision care provider since 1999.

“The folks at VSP have been very responsive and flexible about meeting the needs of Coalition members and keeping up with the scope and level of service our member health plans expect,” Scott continued.

To learn more about the benefits of using VSP click on “Vision Care” from the hccmca.org homepage. ■

HCCMCA ADDS NORTHWEST MEMBERSHIP REPRESENTATIVE

In July 2016, Randy Scott became the Coalition's Northwest membership representative, a part-time position tasked with recruitment and member service.

We sat down with Randy to talk about his new responsibilities.

Q: How did you come to be involved with the Coalition?

A: I've been watching and learning about the work of health care purchasing coalitions since I became a Trustee in 2006. The next year, I helped organize an event that brought the leaders of four successful health care purchasing coalitions to Seattle to talk about how we might form our own coalition in Washington.

For many reasons, the idea didn't take off until early 2009 when I became Secretary Treasurer of the Washington State Pipe Trades. As we were talking about forming a purchasing coalition, Fred Brown contacted me. HCCMCA wanted to work with a Washington coalition because so many of HCCMCA's Alaska constituents come to Seattle for health care services. We asked if HCCMCA might consider expanding its reach into Washington. We reasoned that joining an established coalition made a lot more sense than starting from scratch on our own.

Q: What is it about your experience with HCCMCA that excites you about recruiting new members?

A: The Trust I belong to has experienced first-hand the benefits of Coalition membership. In 2014-15, our Trust saved approximately \$1.8 million on a \$30 million spend

thanks to our participation in HCCMCA's network contracts with Aetna.



We believe we saved another approximately \$750,000 our first year using National CooperativeRx's PBM benefit through HCCMCA. HCCMCA's contracts and savings are a direct benefit to our 1700 members and their families.

As our coalition grows, we will have even more negotiating power. Fundamentally, the labor movement is about the power of numbers and using that power to benefit our common goals. Why not extend that approach to health care?

Q: What is your membership pitch?

A: It's not a pitch; it's straight talk. Coalitions have proven their benefit across the country. We can show prospects real results for real people. The health care industry is consolidating: big pharmacy chains are buying each

other to become even bigger. Small local medical groups are merging into larger groups. Health care consumers need to come together collectively, too. There is strength in numbers.

It's also important for HCCMCA to listen intently to what is going on with its member Trusts and to have a good grasp on what is happening in a very challenging health care market. We only exist as a coalition to help our members. I want to know about their experiences as HCCMCA members and to be a resource if issues arise.

Q: How can people contact you?

A: My mobile phone number is 206-300-9225; my email address is randy.scott@hccmca.org. Get in touch, I'd love to talk. ■

CALENDAR

HCCMCA QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

April 6
June 8
September 29
November 9 ■

Save the Date! NATIONAL COOPERATIVERX AND HCCMCA ANNUAL MEETING

Reception: April 5, 2016
Business Meeting: April 6, 2016
Hotel Captain Cook
Anchorage, Alaska ■

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

THE CARPENTERS TRUSTS OF WESTERN WASHINGTON --

NAILING DOWN THE BENEFITS OF HCCMCA MEMBERSHIP

The Carpenters Trusts of Western Washington is a foundation-to-rooftop organization with floor-to-ceiling workers in between.

Its participants represent many of the professional crafts on a construction site. A select group of carpenters even work underwater on the floating bridges that dot the Pacific Northwest. A significant portion of their work is in the public sector, such as schools and government buildings.

“Carpenters Trusts administers medical and dental benefits for nearly 8,400 participants and over 14,000 dependents,” says Trust Administrator Randy Parker. The Carpenters Trusts is led by a 16-member Board of Trustees and has been in the same building in Seattle’s Belltown neighborhood



CARPENTERS TRUSTS of Western Washington

for most of its 55-year history.

This large group of carpenters and families is now part of HCCMCA.

“The big draw for us is the ability to leverage the Coalition’s contract with Aetna. We hope to see as much as \$10 million in claims savings in the next 10 to 12 months,” Parker said. “Strength in numbers can also create certain advantages during negotiations.”

Noting that the Carpenters Trusts staff is dedicated to “advocating for our members and their families, we anticipate the size of Aetna’s provider network and benefits from its utilization management and

behavioral health services will have a positive impact on our group,” he said.

In the future, Parker is looking forward to the Coalition Health Fairs. “Our membership lives throughout Washington, Northern Idaho, Montana and Wyoming—really wherever quality construction takes place in our region. As much as providing meaningful medical and dental benefits for carpenters and their families, our real purpose is to help these hardworking families stay healthy. This not only helps stretch their valuable health dollars, it also improves the quality of their lives. The Health Fairs will be an important part of this ongoing effort.” ■

HEALTH FAIRS EXPAND IN ALASKA AND WASHINGTON

Two new locations—Ketchikan and Tacoma—welcomed the HCCMCA Health Fairs in 2015. Overall attendance continues to grow with 5,682 participating; a 3% increase over 2014.

This year, pre-registration was required in most locations in Alaska (it has always been a requirement in Washington). That worked out well for first-time Ketchikan attendee Nora Dale, an adult probation and parole officer with the State of Alaska and an ASEA member. “It was extremely well-organized. I went from

one station to the next and got everything done—boom, boom, boom—no waiting, no worrying,” she said. “The people drawing blood and giving flu shots were very personable, friendly, and professional.”

Surveys done in Spokane and Tacoma confirm the professionalism (83%) and friendliness (93%) of the medical staff at those Health Fairs. People also were impressed (93%) with the way their privacy was respected at the event.

Standard blood work and thyroid tests attracted the most interest in almost equal numbers; just over 5,000 people had both of those tests done. Vitamin D testing was the third most popular choice overall.

“The Health Fair was a good opportunity for me to do a self-check and get a feel for how well I’ve been following my doctor’s orders, without having to go in to the office,” Dale said. “Now that I have my results, I’m eager to share them with my doctor.” ■



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READ ABOUT COALITION ADDS NORTHWEST MEMBERSHIP REPRESENTATIVE, P. 2.

Since 1994, the Health Care Cost Management Corporation of Alaska, Inc. (HCCMCA) has been helping member health plans control health care costs by negotiating better pricing on health benefits and services than these same plans could achieve on their own. Current member health plans include 24 headquartered in Alaska and 16 headquartered in the Pacific Northwest.

news

Discounts Better Than Ever

National CooperativeRx has extended and strengthened its contract with CVS/caremark. That was the good news Josh Bindl, the cooperative's new CEO got to announce in his first message to members.

The new contract, which runs through 2018:

- Maintains or improves all pricing discounts
- Reduces dispensing fees
- Increases all rebate guarantees and maintains 100% pass through of all rebates, guaranteed on a minimum quarterly basis
- Provides improved discount and rebate guarantees estimated at \$55.5 million for the 3-year term

NEW CONTRACT WITH CAREMARK IMPROVES BENEFITS



- Maintains plan flexibility without mandating any programs

The renewal process started in mid-2015 when prescription benefit management (PBM) consulting firm Truveris conducted a “market check” on the current contract. In August 2015, Segal, another PBM consultant, took over the request for proposals process. The renewal was signed in September.

“Not only does the renewal extend what was already an industry-leading contract, it saves plans the inevitable disruption that comes when you change providers. CVS/caremark are known quantities that have demonstrated their value in the past and are willing to strengthen the relationship,” said Fred Brown HCCMCA Executive Director and member of the National CooperativeRx board.

“Our hope,” Brown continued, “is that Coalition member health plans recognize this contract extension as a great opportunity to take advantage of unexpected savings in 2016, and to achieve even more savings in 2017 and 2018.” ■