

trion™ **Benefits Brief**
INNOVATION IN BENEFITS

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the benefit of our client community

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Bills for Errors Won't Be Paid by Medicare
From PATRIOT NEWS • August 23, 2007

If a hospital screws up, it shouldn't get paid for additional medical care resulting from the mistake, right? That's an argument made by some businesses, consumer advocates and politicians who are sick of high hospital costs and quality issues.

Now, it's the medicine prescribed by Medicare, which will stop paying for medical care resulting from some preventable infections and medical errors. The policy will begin in October 2008.

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Fewer firms offer health coverage
From EMPLOYEE BENEFIT NEWS • August 28, 2007

Efforts at health reform haven't stalled the decline in job-based health coverage. Approximately, 60% of private sector employers provided health benefits to their workers in March 2007, down from 62% in 2006, reports the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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Rise in Cost of Employer-Paid Health Insurance Slows

From WASHINGTON POST • September 12, 2007

The cost of employer-provided health insurance rose 6.1 percent this year, the smallest jump since 1999 but still well above the increase in wages and consumer prices, according to an annual survey released today by the Kaiser Family Foundation.

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Operation Vacation

From WASHINGTON POST • September 9, 2007

The reputation of outstanding U.S. hospitals has long drawn wealthy patients from around the world. But today, traffic also heads in the opposite direction. It's a trend that quietly has been expanding well beyond facelifts, tummy tucks and dental crowns to embrace all sorts of non-emergency treatments.

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Wellness Programs Can Be Difficult to Sell to Upper Management Because ROI Numbers Can Be Vague

From EMPLOYEE BENEFITS NEWS • September 1, 2007

Wellness programs are continuing to grow in popularity -- as a method of curbing rising health care costs and as a feature to compliment newly adopted consumer-driven health plans. Now, advisers, the people known for analyzing hard numbers and assessing ROI, are jumping on the wellness bandwagon en masse.

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Health Benefit Cost Per Worker Almost \$6,900, According to Study

From NATIONAL UNDERWRITER • August 24, 2007

The average annual health plan cost per employee is \$6,881 (medical only coverage), with an average employee cost of \$3,110 and an average employer cost of \$3,771 per employee, according to a survey by United Benefit Advisors.

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AARP to Appeal Retiree Health Benefits Case to Supreme Court

From FINANCIAL WEEK • August 24, 2007

The AARP will appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court a decision that validates federal regulations allowing companies to provide different health benefits to younger retirees and those eligible for Medicare.

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Mini-Meds Offer Some Relief -- Why Limited Benefits Plans Are Gaining Popularity

From CFO.COM • August 17, 2007

Think of mini-meds as the flip side of catastrophic coverage: instead of forcing employees to pay out-of-pocket for smaller expenses while guarding them against huge outlays in the event of serious illness or accident, mini-meds instead pick up the tab for low-cost, routine forms of

health care such as doctors' visits, immunizations, X-rays, and emergency-room charges, but impose strict annual caps on payouts.

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