

Follow-Up Crucial to Client Retention
Goldenrule/United Healthcare – January 2008
An Interview with William A. Steffen

Arizona and Florida Health Insurance agent and broker Bill Steffen doesn't hesitate to tell you that he takes his job seriously. He also believes all health insurance brokers should consider the same approach.

"You're dealing with people's lives, health, and money," Bill said. "I feel a responsibility to not only get my clients a plan that meets their requirements but to explain how their plan works." Bill says brokers can differentiate themselves from their competition by showing a genuine concern for their clients and taking the time to carefully clarify plan details.

Three Things You Should Explain To Every Client:

1. **Plan Terminology:** Copay, coinsurance, deductible, and lifetime maximum all makes sense to us. But to an individual coming off a benefit-rich employer health plan where everything was automatic or to a newcomer to health insurance, you need to take the time to verbally define those technical terms.
2. **Key Benefits of the Plan:** For example, if the plan has a preventive care benefit, explain how the benefit works and when it can be used. If there is a waiting period or exclusion riders, identify the details and how the provision applies to the client.
3. **How to Use Their Network:** Last and extremely important — make sure the clients know the name of their network. Emphasize the potential out-of-pocket savings when seeing a network provider. Also, remind the clients to always verify by phone if the provider is still in the network before receiving care.

Bill says brokers need to present themselves as consultants instead of order takers. Those clients will not only value you as experts but you'll gain referrals in the process. "I also tell my clients that they can shop health insurance online but they'll pay the same price as if they purchased the plan from me," Bill emphasized. "The big difference is you'll get my expertise and guidance in helping you choose a plan and the service after."

Finally, Bill says that you have to believe in the product that you're selling. "My choice is Golden Rule," Bill said. "Not only do I present the company but I have a Golden Rule policy."