

Group Benefits

A few options to consider:

1. Employer covering the cost of employee subscribing to an individual plan such as Alberta Blue Cross (life and disability insurance not included)
The individual plans use 'after-tax' or net-dollars to base premiums, therefore cost for health benefits is about 30 per cent higher employee group benefit plans.
2. Employer subscribing to an association program such as Chamber of Commerce, Oasis or Ross and Associates (includes life and disability insurance)
Some association programs are not interested in quoting for group benefit coverage for small agencies. Association plans are one policy that takes into account all individuals regardless of age and risk factors. The association plans are billing fees that insure against future use— insurance against dental costs or healthcare costs. It has limits for dental, and other medical needs and vision care and other services such as chiropractor are add-ons to basic health plans. It uses 'before-tax' gross dollars to base premiums.
3. Employer sets up health spending account through Quikcard for health coverage and a block of employers together subscribe to a group life and disability insurance plan through a company such as Grey Insurance or RBC Insurance. This gives preferred insurance rates because of the larger block-group. Life (and dependent life) and accidental death & dismemberment, and long-term disability are mandatory for the whole block, but the individual agencies could decide on the optional coverage for short-term disability or critical-illness insurance.

Employer pays monthly into a health spending account for each employee and the employee decides how to use the money. Employee could use all or just part of the funds and un-used portion are returned to the provider at year-end. Once the money is gone for the year for the employee, they can't access more until the employer credits the account again in next fiscal year (the employee can then pay for other costs out of pocket, or wait until the spending account is built up, or the employer could choose to give more money per year to employees with higher needs).

Employees are issued an electronic card that is accepted with all dentists, all pharmacists and many other healthcare providers. (There is an on-line list of service providers who will accept the card) The employee's account is debited at point of sale.

4. For employees who have high medical needs there is always the option for Alberta Blue Cross Non-Group coverage which considers more catastrophic needs up to \$25,000 per subscriber. This has higher premiums than the normal individual Blue Cross plan and there is no option for life insurance and does not take into account dental, vision care, chiropractic, massage etc.