

May 4, 2009

‘Advocate’ helps employees with health questions

By Lawrence Houck

A new benefit for JPMorgan Chase employees offers help in dealing with health care issues ranging from resolving medical claims to understanding health conditions to how to best keep health care costs down.

The Health Advocate program links employees in the United States with specially trained service representatives who provide one-on-one help.

“Health Advocate is really a support system to help employees make the best use of benefits and ultimately have the most healthy outcome,” said Bernadette Ulissi, U.S. benefits manager.

When employees call, e-mail or contact Health Advocate online, they are given a “personal health advocate” to help them through whatever situation they are facing. The same contact will work with the employee through the entire process so that the employee has someone who is familiar with his or her case.

“There are not going to be three people to talk to to resolve an issue,” Ulissi said. “If it takes more people, the advocate is going to reach out to those other people and come back with a comprehensive view.”

Health Advocate is an independent company that is the leading health advocacy and assistance company in the United States, Ulissi said. The personal health advocates assigned to employees come from medical backgrounds.

Employees and their family members generally do not have to be enrolled in JPMorgan Chase benefits to take advantage of the plan.

Additionally, the program is available for employees’ family members that aren’t normally covered by benefits, such as parents and parents-in-law.

One employee who recently took advantage of the service was Lori Miller, a senior Human Resource business partner. Miller said she called the Health Advocate line after having problems getting her insurance company to cover hand surgery for her son.

Because of previous health conditions, Miller’s son needed the surgery to take place at a hospital instead of an out-patient facility, but there were no doctors on her plan who were covered at the hospital.

Miller said her personal health advocate made repeated phone calls, outlined the appeal options that were available and eventually was able to get the insurance company to cover the costs.

“She was extremely responsive and worked with the doctor’s office directly,” Miller said. “I really felt that the representative that was helping me out was just as invested as I was.”

How to get help

Health Advocate service representatives are on call Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. Eastern time.

There are three ways to reach them:

Phone: (866) 611-8298

E-mail: answers@HealthAdvocate.com

Online: www.HealthAdvocate.com/members