



DOCTOR-PATIENT

Help Patients Choose You Financially

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Health care in the United States is fraught with conflicting agendas and motivations. A managed care company may not want to significantly reduce the cost of health care, as doing so would reduce its premiums and ultimately the percentage of those premiums it retains. Likewise, surgeons are not incentivized to suggest more effective conservative care because it has the direct impact of reducing their income. And consumers may opt for medical care for their back pain because their health insurance plan includes greater coverage for MD visits than for DC visits – even though chiropractic care has been shown time and again to be superior.

While we can't do much to sway decisions made by managed care companies, surgeons or other providers, we *can* help consumers understand how to make better choices. Consumers' choices not only impact their wallets, but more importantly, their health.

A Way to Help More Patients Find Their Way to You: The HSA



An excellent solution to this dilemma is the health savings account (HSA). As someone who has enjoyed the benefits of an HSA for almost 20 years, I can tell you it continues to be the best choice for our family; and it is a better choice now than it was two decades ago.

As the cost of health care coverage steadily increases, employers seek creative ways to offer adequate health insurance while maintaining the same level of expense. One option is to offer lesser plans. These generally involve a smaller provider network that may not reflect the preferred level of care. Another trend is to offer plans with higher co-pays. This also is not popular, but can work in favor of chiropractic care.

The more choices dwindle and co-pays increase, the more people understand they are spending their own money; and the more an HSA makes sense. HSAs encourage consumers to spend their health care dollars more wisely.

If you are not familiar with HSAs, it is time to do some homework. Simply put, a health savings account is a savings account that combines with a high-deductible health insurance plan to provide coverage for more expensive care should it be required. The reduced cost of the high-deductible plan leaves the patient with discretionary dollars to spend on maintaining their health, with the goal of never using the high-deductible part of the program. This is how our HSA has worked for our family.

Some Other Advantages of HSAs

- You decide how to spend the money in your health savings account.
- Money placed in your HSA is tax free and can earn interest tax free.
- Unused HSA money rolls over and can build up to cover health care expenses after retirement.
- You own your HSA account even if your employer contributes to it; and it goes with you when you change jobs.

For You and Your Patients

Every doctor of chiropractic should have an HSA. If you believe chiropractic care promotes and maintains your health, it only makes sense.

The same holds true for most of your patients. The ones who are consistently enjoying chiropractic care should also be enjoying the financial rewards that come with increased health and wellness.

Yes, illness is unpredictable, and some people may need to utilize their high-deductible plan at some point. But the advantages outweigh the disadvantages for many people.

Spend some time learning more about HSAs. Chances are one of your patients works in health insurance and can offer a program to your patients if their employer is not able to do so. An HSA puts everything into perspective: high-deductible dollars in case hospitals and surgeons are ever needed, and discretionary dollars for chiropractic to maintain health and wellness.

Read more findings on my blog: <http://blog.toyourhealth.com/wrblog>. You can also visit me on Facebook and Twitter (donpetersenjr, @donaldpetersen).

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