

newsworthy trends

American Workers Need To Take Steps To Plan For Their Future

(NAPSA)—Even as America witnesses the erosion of such social and corporate safety nets as Social Security, pension plans and health care, employees are taking a much more active role in selecting and funding their benefits at work.

According to the MetLife Study of Open Enrollment Benefits Trends, nearly half of workers say their company's open enrollment period for benefits brings feelings of responsibility, more so than being overburdened or worried. In fact, roughly half wish open enrollment came more than once a year.

In this new benefits environment, employees are increasingly looking to the workplace for support, education and coaching to help them make the right decisions. They want succinct and easily understandable tools in order to identify the most appropriate benefits for them and their families.

"Today's employees really care about their workplace benefits. They know that it's up to them to build and fund their own personal safety nets," said Dr. Ronald Leopold, vice president, Institutional Business, MetLife. "With workers taking on more of the financial burden of benefits, they're looking to their employer to share the 'information burden.' Employees want quick tips and financial advice to ensure they're

Tips For Open Enrollment

- Understand your options.
- Consider your life situation.
- Make sure you are adequately protected.
- Compare coverage.
- List the services you need.
- Make sure you don't have any coverage gaps or costly overlaps.



on the right track to protect themselves and their family."

Top Tips For Open Enrollment Season Include:

- Understand your options, especially since companies are offering more benefits than ever before, including voluntary benefits for which employees pay all or most of the cost.
- Consider the impact on your benefits if your life situation has recently changed. Did you get married, have a baby or buy a house?
 - Make sure you are adequately protected. Many employers offer life insurance coverage that is only one or two times your salary, so you may need to purchase supplemental coverage, which can be relatively inexpensive.
 - If you are married, compare the coverage that your spouse has so you don't pay for double coverage if you don't need it.
 - Make a list of the services

that you and your family may need (such as checkups, child immunizations or mammograms) and check to see that the medical plan you select will cover those services.

- Make sure that you have disability insurance, in case you become injured or sick and can't work.

According to the study, most employees—especially those under 35 years old—are interested in support tools and workplace advice, in particular in the areas of retirement savings and health care. Nearly three-quarters of workers want their company to alert them about additional insurance protection they should consider whenever they have a significant "life event."

For example, single employees might consider disability income insurance and health savings accounts over dependent life insurance; while midlifers and preretirees are likely to get the most from retirement products and long-term care insurance.

After salary, employees say benefits are the leading reason they work. Therefore, smart consumers will do their homework before making these important decisions to ensure no gaps or costly overlaps exist in their coverage.

For additional tips on how you can best prepare for Open Enrollment season, visit whymetlife.com.