

HEALTH

Americans Prefer Cleaning Toilets Over Researching Health Benefits

NewsUSA

(NU) - When it comes to choosing the right health insurance plan, American workers are not spending much time researching the best options for themselves or their families. Even though the terms of health insurance policies can change year over year, 56 percent say they devoted less than 30 minutes to researching their benefits options during their last open enrollment, according to the 2015 Aflac Open Enrollment Survey.

In fact, many workers would rather be doing almost anything other than researching their health benefits. The survey found that more than a third (38 percent) would rather clean out their email inboxes, 23 percent would rather clean their toilets and 18 percent would rather do their taxes.

Despite the shift to more consumer-directed health care, U.S. workers are in denial about the financial consequences resulting from their health insurance choices. This is concerning, given that an Aflac study found more than half (52 percent) of workers have less than \$1,000 on hand to pay out-of-pocket medical costs associated with unexpected serious illness or injury. And 42 percent waste up to \$750 annually with mistakes made during open enrollment with insurance benefits.

Employees need to weigh not only the monthly cost of insurance plans, but also the amount of the total cost of their health care that they will be responsible for.

Here are four tips to help em-



Take the time and find the perfect health plan.

ployees choose the right benefits and protect their wallets:

1. Review and compare benefits information. Be aware of annual insurance policy changes to avoid costly mistakes.

2. Understand the financial implications your choices have on your budget. Calculate yearly medical expenses, like deductible costs and monthly premiums.

3. Consider adding voluntary insurance for more financial protection. Accident, critical illness and hospital policies help cover what major medical insurance doesn't, such as out-of-pocket costs and other expenses that continue to roll in even if you're too ill or injured to work.

4. Seek advice from HR or insurance consultants to help understand your benefits coverage.

To learn more about the 2015 Aflac Open Enrollment Survey, visit AflacWorkForcesReport.com.