

## **Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree Webinars Questions & Answers**

### **Enrolling in Health Insurance Plans**

- Q: Can I stay in the current Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) Senior Gold plan?
- A: No. After 12/31/2021, Medicare-eligible retirees and their Medicare-eligible dependents over age 65 will not be able to participate in the BCBS Senior Gold Plan.
- Q: I like my current Thrivent health insurance, can I purchase similar insurance through Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree?
- A: The Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree benefits counselors are familiar with the current Thrivent health insurance plan and can provide you with health insurance options similar to your current plan. However, keep in mind that the individual insurance plans offered through Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree provide coverage specific to each retiree and eligible dependent, which will allow you to select the health insurance that best meets your personal health care needs, lifestyle and budget. As such, the health insurance plan you and your eligible dependent select may not be the plan that most closely matches the Thrivent plan in which you are currently enrolled.
- Q: Is there a limit to the number of prescriptions that can be entered into the Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree system?
- A: No, there is no limit to the number of prescriptions you can enter into the Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree system. In fact, you should enter all of your prescriptions with the appropriate dosage and frequency information. This will help Mercer Marketplace 365+ accurately assess your prescription drug plan needs.
- Q: Can I change my plans from year to year?
- A: Yes, however, the rules vary depending on your situation and your plan.

*Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D Plans:* Each fall during the annual Medicare open enrollment period, you may change Medicare Advantage plans and/or Medicare Part D (prescription drug) plans. If you have a qualifying life event that impacts the coverage available to you (for example, if you move from one state to another), you will have a special enrollment period which would allow you to make changes to your coverage.

*Medicare Supplement Plans:* Medicare Supplement plans are regulated by each state and, in some states, carriers may require underwriting in order to change plans during the year. A qualifying life event is not necessarily a requirement to change your Medicare Supplement plan at any point during the year.

*Dental and Vision Plans:* Dental and vision plans can be enrolled in or changed anytime. However, there may be waiting periods for certain services. You should ask your benefits counselor about any waiting periods.

Q: Can I ever be denied renewal of my individual health insurance?

A: No, as long as you pay the premiums to your carrier, your coverage cannot be discontinued. If the plan in which you enroll is no longer offered by the insurer at some point in the future, you will have an opportunity to enroll in a new plan.

Q: I'll become Medicare eligible next year. When will I begin working with Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree to find individual coverage?

A: Approximately 90 days before your Medicare effective date you will receive a welcome kit from Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree providing you with the steps you need to take to schedule your plan consultation and begin the process of selecting individual Medicare coverage. Once you receive your welcome kit you may begin working with a benefits counselor.

### **Benefits Counselor Consultations**

Q: Are plan consultations and enrollment through Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree by telephone only?

A: Yes. The Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree service model is to work with retirees and their eligible dependents by telephone, only. Mercer has provided this service since 2007 and has consulted with and enrolled tens of thousands of individuals using this model. The Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree benefits counselors are trained to deliver our services via the phone. Retirees and eligible dependents who are comfortable with using a computer may be referred to information on the Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree website when working with a benefits counselor.

Q: Are the retiree and spouse required to have separate consultations?

A: Yes; because these are individual health insurance plans and each individual's health insurance needs differ, the retiree and spouse will have their own consultation and enrollments. However, with verbal permission, a retiree and spouse can be on the phone for each other's consultation and enrollment.

Q: Can my spouse or adult child be on the consultation and enrollment calls with me?

A: Yes, we encourage you to have your spouse, adult child or anyone else who assists you in making your healthcare and/or insurance decisions, on the phone with you when you speak with a benefits counselor. The benefits counselor can help set up a call to include anyone else that you'd like to have on the phone with you. You will only need to give

your verbal permission to have another person on the call with you. You will also have the option to complete a Personal Information Authorization form which allows the person(s) you designate to have access to your plan information and/or selections for up to one year.

Q: I have already submitted a Power of Attorney form to Thrivent. Will I need to provide it again when my authorized representative works with a Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree benefits counselor?

A: When you work with a Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree benefits counselor, let them know that you have previously provided a Power of Attorney form to Thrivent. The benefits counselor will locate the form and determine whether it allows them to work directly with your designated representative. The benefits counselor will let you know if an updated Power of Attorney form is needed.

Also, as long as the retiree/eligible spouse is on the phone call, they can give verbal permission to have anyone else on the call with a Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree benefits counselor. A Power of Attorney form would be required to speak with anyone other than the retiree or eligible spouse if the retiree/eligible spouse is not on the phone call.

Q: Who pays Mercer?

A: The individual insurance market is highly regulated. Individual insurance rates are filed with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and state departments of insurance, and the rates include commissions that cannot be removed whether the commission is paid to a broker or retained by the insurer. When someone enrolls through Mercer Marketplace, there is a commission paid by the insurer to Mercer; however, the benefits counselor is paid a salary and receives no incentive to enroll an individual in a particular plan or with a certain carrier.

### **Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) Questions**

Q: How was the Thrivent subsidy determined and does it increase if insurance premiums increase due to age?

A: Thrivent took great care and consideration in determining the Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) subsidies. Their objective is to provide an HRA subsidy that will allow retirees and their eligible dependents to purchase individual health insurance that provides comparable coverage as your current plan, today.

In determining the HRA amounts Thrivent recognized that several factors, including age and geography, determine what an individual is charged for their insurance. To account for those factors, HRA amounts may be different among individuals. For example, since plan costs can vary by geography, if you live in Minnesota your HRA subsidy will be

different than it is for someone who lives in Wisconsin. Also, if you live in an area that is rated by age, the amount of your HRA amount may differ and may increase in the future as you move into a higher age band.

Q: Is the subsidy I receive from Thrivent taxable?

A: No. By receiving the Thrivent subsidy through an HRA, the reimbursements are not taxable to participants.

Q: Do a retiree and spouse each receive a subsidy or is it just for the retiree?

A: If eligible, the retiree and spouse will each receive a subsidy. The HRA will be set up as a household account with the retiree as the primary account holder. Eligible HRA participants will receive a monthly subsidy allocation to their household account.

Q: What happens if I don't use all of my HRA balance by the end of the year?

A: Any remaining balance in your HRA will carry over into the next year.

Q: Can I contribute to the HRA?

A: The HRA is entirely funded by Thrivent. Under Internal Revenue Code rules, participants are not permitted to make contributions to the HRA.

Q: If the retiree dies, will the surviving spouse still receive the Thrivent subsidy?

A: If the retiree passes away and the spouse is a participant in the HRA, they will continue to receive the Thrivent subsidy for as long as they continue their enrollment in a health insurance plan through Mercer Marketplace 365+ Retiree.

Q: How do I know what expenses are reimbursable under the HRA?

A: Please refer to your Reimbursement Instructional Guide for a list of expenses that are eligible for reimbursement under the HRA. Your benefits counselor will also be able to assist you with any questions regarding your HRA.