

Health Insurance Rates Continue to Climb

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Employers faced another year of double-digit rate increases -- 12.7 percent this year, the largest since 1990. And there's also less coverage for retirees and for small-business workers. The Kaiser Family Foundation sponsored the survey of 3,262 public and private employers and found that premiums are likely to continue to rise.

We should expect to see sharply rising health care costs for the foreseeable future. Workers can expect to pay more and get less coverage.

The increases are attributed largely to more spending on prescription drugs and hospital care by an aging population. For the first time in four years, more workers experienced reduced benefits than increased benefits.

Over the past two years, 9 percent of large employers -- those with 200 or more workers -- have eliminated retiree benefits for new hires or existing employees, the survey said.

What's more, 11 percent of large employers say they will likely eliminate retiree benefits for new or existing workers over the next two years. There will be less and less retiree coverage.

In addition, the number of small employers (three to 199 workers) offering health coverage dropped from 67 percent in 2000 to 61 percent this year. Small employers are particularly vulnerable to premium increases because they have less bargaining power with insurers.

With the downturn in the economy the premium increase is a "double whammy" for employers large and small. Employers have responded by cutting benefits or raising the cost to employees. Premiums reached new plateaus this year: about \$3,000, on average, for single coverage and \$8,000 for family coverage, the survey said.

While employers still pick up most of the cost, the employees' share has risen substantially. Employees now pay an average of \$454 per year for single coverage (a 27 percent increase over last year) and \$2,084 per year for family coverage (a 16 percent increase).

Employees also are paying higher deductibles and co-payments for prescription drugs this year, the survey reported. And there's more pain on the way. Among large employers, nearly eight of 10 reported they will likely increase the amount employees will pay for premiums next year.

[Kaiser Family Foundation Health Benefits Survey](#) **September 5, 2002**

DR. MERCOLA'S COMMENT:

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As this article implies, health care (or more accurately, disease care) is going in the wrong direction.

As Nick Regush said [earlier this year](#):

"There is no way to be nice about this. There is no point in raising false hopes. There is no treatment or vaccine in sight. There is no miracle breakthrough on the horizon.

"Medicine, as we know it, is dying. It's entering a terminal phase.

"What began as an acute illness reached the chronic stage about a decade ago and progression towards death has been remarkably swift and well beyond anything one could have predicted.

"The disease is caused by conflict of interest, tainted research, greed for big bucks, pretentious doctors and scientists, lying, cheating, invasion by the morally bankrupt marketing automatons of the drug industry, derelict politicians and federal and state regulators - all seasoned with huge doses of self-importance and foul odor."

The US currently spends about 1.5 trillion dollars for healthcare, and the projections are that it will double in less than ten years.

The sad tragedy is that we are spending all of this money on disease management focused on drugs and surgery and our return on this investment is profoundly poor. More and more people do not have the energy they need to get through the day while millions of others are suffering with painful crippling diseases because they have violated basic health principles.

Many of their choices were made out of ignorance and it's my passion to make increase the public's awareness of these health tragedies. I hope to give you, the consumer, the tools to become a major force for good health and the alleviation of disease and suffering.

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