

National Survey Shows Consumers Prefer Agents When Shopping for and Purchasing Individual Medical Insurance

<http://www.insurancenewsnet.com/article.asp?neid=6Ccu8tXDdJvMiQUcjZwAwNQc2NXkQRRzuTp5ElkJkjl8cnnMjGen2DqHBK2ca9Ip>

National Survey Shows Consumers Prefer Agents When Shopping for and Purchasing Individual Medical Insurance Those who bought through an agent were significantly more satisfied with their health plans than those who purchased insurance online

MILWAUKEE--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- A recent online survey of more than 1,000 consumers found that those who purchased individual medical (IM) insurance through a professional agent were significantly more satisfied with their health plans than those who bought IM insurance online.

The independent study was commissioned by Milwaukee-based Assurant Health, a leading national provider of Individual Medical, Small Group and Specialty health insurance products. Some of its other key findings included:

- 64% of those who bought through agents used the word helpful to describe their experiences while only 36% of online purchasers used this term.
- 91% of those who purchased through an agent bought the plan their agent recommended.
- 31% of those shopping online described the experience as time-consuming
- Despite the recent proliferation of Web-based insurance brokerages, 62% of the survey respondents bought their insurance through an agent.
- In addition, consumers who purchased through an agent were significantly more satisfied in regard to how easy it was to understand their options and choose a plan that gave them the best coverage tailored to their needs than those who purchased online.
- After being presented with information on how agents can help, and advised that purchasing through an agent does not increase their costs, nearly one out of four of those who purchased online reported that, if they were going to purchase IM insurance today, they would buy it through an agent.

"This study confirms our long-held belief that independent insurance agents play a vital role in educating consumers and helping them make informed decisions about their health plans," said Don Hamm, President and CEO, Assurant Health. "It also shows that consumers greatly value agents' personalized services and recommendations."

Assurant Health hopes this survey brings attention to agents' numerous contributions to consumers and our entire health care system.

For more information, including a full report on the survey findings, go to Assurant Health Newsroom (<http://www.assuranthealth.com/corp/ah/Newsroom/newsroom>) or <http://pitch.pe/19259>.

About the Survey

The research commissioned by Assurant Health was conducted in May/June 2009 by the Chicago firm of Beall Research & Training, Inc. One-thousand-three (1,003) consumers who purchased individual medical (IM) insurance within the past two years were surveyed about their shopping and purchase experiences. The respondents were recruited from a representative online panel of Americans. All differences noted are statistically significant at the .05 level.

About Assurant Health

Assurant Health has been in business since 1892 and is the brand name for products underwritten and issued by Time Insurance Company, John Alden Life Insurance Company and Union Security Insurance Company. Together, these three underwriting companies provide health insurance coverage to people in 45 states. Each underwriting company is financially responsible for its own insurance products. Primary products include individual medical, small group, short-term and student health insurance products, as well as non-insurance products and consumer-choice products such as Health Savings Accounts and Health Reimbursement Arrangements. With almost 3,000 employees, Assurant Health is headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with

operations offices in Minnesota, Idaho and Florida, as well as sales offices across the country. The Assurant Health Web site is www.assuranthealth.com.

Assurant Health is part of Assurant, a premier provider of specialized insurance products and related services in North America and selected international markets. Its four key businesses – Assurant Employee Benefits, Assurant Health, Assurant Solutions and Assurant Specialty Property – have partnered with clients who are leaders in their industries and have built leadership positions in a number of specialty insurance market segments worldwide.

Assurant, a Fortune 500 company and a member of the S&P 500, is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol AIZ. Assurant has more than \$25 billion in assets and \$8 billion in annual revenue. Assurant has approximately 15,000 employees worldwide and is headquartered in New York's financial district. The Assurant Web site is www.assurant.com.

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