



New England Credit Union Services, LLC

Comprehensive Benefits Administrators Find Creative Solutions for Align CU's Employee Health Insurance Needs

(8/6/2014) - Align Credit Union, headquartered in Lowell, MA, takes great pride in offering its employees a "second to none" package of employee benefits and doing so at the least possible cost to its employees. So the prospect of a 27% rate increase to their health insurance rates was quite alarming. But, "that is exactly what we were looking at", said Align's Vice President of Human Resources Kelly Davidson. "We were concerned that we might have needed to make some very tough decisions regarding how this would impact our 110 full time employees," added Davidson.

What that meant to their benefit management company, Comprehensive Benefit Administrators (CBA), was simply "time to go to work", according to Andy Hollatz who directs the efforts of CBA on behalf of more than 70 local credit unions. "When your starting point is north of a 25% increase, you know that plain vanilla is not going to get it done," said Hollatz. "Luckily, CBA specializes in creative solutions to challenging situations just like what was confronting Align," added Hollatz.

"At first glance, the plan we selected from BlueCross would appear to be anything but a good fit for Align", according to CBA's CEO Mike McKenna. "Off the shelf it has a co-insurance, a very high deductible, and above average co-payments for office visits and other services. Our in-house technology allows us to take a base plan like this one from BlueCross and re-build it to the meet the expectations of our client", said McKenna. Even after retrofitting the plan to come very close to the credit union's current plan, the savings were significant.

"CBA did more than just come up with a great plan. They worked closely with us to roll it out. That included small group meetings with our employees at all of our branches where they went over the customized benefit summaries that explained exactly how the new plan worked. The feedback from the employees has been great. After hearing about the challenges we had with this renewal, they were ready to get engaged and help make things work," said Davidson.

"CBA presented us with a telemedicine program that we believe will not only provide our employees and their families with a tremendous new benefit, it will also provide long-term savings for Align. The program allows our employees access to doctors 24/7 so they no longer have to take time off from work for the routine stuff that happens to us all," concluded Davidson.

"I know that our employees are our greatest asset, said Ken Del Rossi, president/CEO of Align. The Board and I committed to recognizing that in part through offering the best benefit package possible at the least possible cost. I was well aware of what type of an increase we were initially looking at, so when our CBA team came in and presented us with a great benefit plan and no change to our current rates, we were blown away," said Del Rossi.