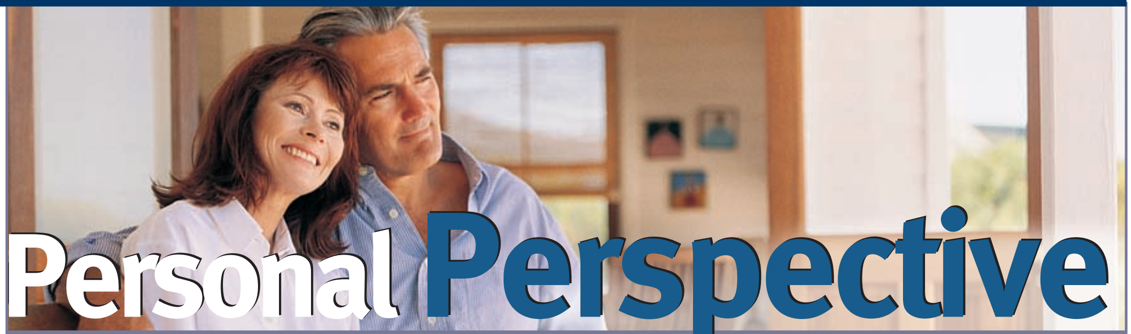


Personal Perspective

volume 39 • issue 4

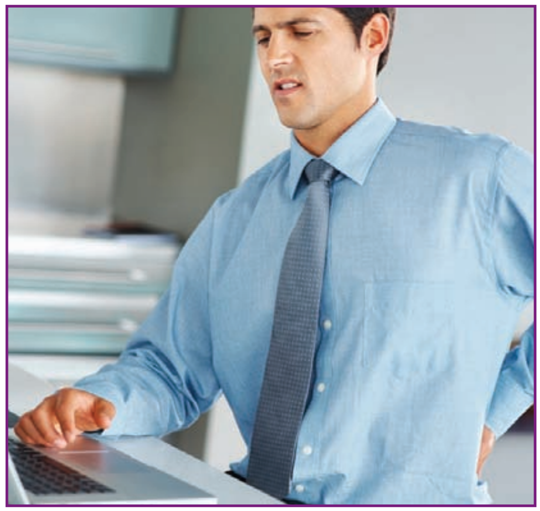
COMMERCIAL SPECIALISTS INSURANCE SERVICES

100 East Thousand Oks Blvd. Suite 187
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

P: 888.501.2747
F: 888.502.2747
E: info@csisonline.com

Back Health Affects the Whole Body

The spine and its associated muscles and nerves play an enormous role in the overall wellness of the body. Anyone who has had a tension headache or sciatica can tell of how debilitating the pain can be. But treatment can be painful, too – in the pocketbook. That's because most treatments rely on office visits, x-rays or other medical images, and prescription drugs. The visits to the doctors, technicians, and pharmacies can add to the stress of lost time at work or with family.



Increasingly, people with chronic pain in the head, back or limbs are turning to osteopathy for help. The treatments, sometimes falling generically under the catchall term "chiropractic," are less expensive and less invasive than allopathic (traditional) methods. Many insurers now cover osteopathic treatments.

If you suffer from chronic head, back or limb pain, you might want to check your insurance to see if osteopathic care is covered. Not only will a good doctor give you diagnosis and treatment, he will also provide you with exercises that will help maintain your good health.

Using a Roth IRA for Inheritance

If you are at the age when you are starting to consider leaving an inheritance for your children or grandchildren, you might want to think about setting up a Roth IRA for them. A Roth IRA uses already-taxed money, so withdrawals by the beneficiaries would not be taxed under current law.

There are no minimum distributions for the IRA holder, so if you open and fund an account for your children and they don't need it when they are older, they can carry it over to their children. If they were to need the funds, the only requirement for withdrawing without fees or penalties is that they are at least 59 years old.

You can contribute up to $5,000 to a Roth IRA in 2011, but contributions can't exceed your child's earned income for the year. For a small child, this might pose a problem, but many teens earn that in a summer.

Even a small amount per year can grow into a large fund by the time a child is old enough to make withdrawals. If you would like to explore this kind of an account, give us a call to find out more.

If You Can't Get Healthcare at Work

More companies these days are cutting costs by slashing benefits. If your employer is one of those, you might need to find health insurance on the individual market. Traditional plans can be costly, so if you (and your dependents) are relatively healthy, you might want to consider a catastrophic major medical plan.

These plans usually have lower premiums than traditional plans, but they have high deductibles – the portion you are responsible for paying before the insurer kicks in. They also typically cover only major hospital and medical expenses above the deductible. Routine doctor visits and prescriptions generally aren't covered, and if prescriptions are covered, you will almost always have to pay part of the price.

You can get these plans in combination with others that cover preventive care, and many of the major medical plans qualify for HSAs, meaning you can take pre-tax dollars and save them in a health savings account that is dedicated to medical expenses. Catastrophic major medical plans are particularly attractive to young adults whose employers don't offer healthcare and to older adults who don't have employer-based insurance but who don't yet qualify for Medicare.

Long-Term Care or Disability Insurance?

An extended loss of income, not covered by an employer's workers compensation policy, could rapidly deplete your finances. Add to that the cost of care, and you could be looking at a devastating situation.

There are two types of insurance that deal with these circumstances, but both cover different aspects. Disability insurance pays a regular monthly benefit if you are unable to perform the functions of your regular job, as defined in your policy. There is usually a delay between the injury and the flow of cash, and there is a limit on how much money or how long the insurer will pay.

Long-term care insurance isn't necessarily tied to a defined disability but, rather, is meant to pay for nursing-home costs or other long-term care as stated in the policy. Payments for the care continue as long as the insured is in the nursing home or under the supervision of the approved care facility. There are monetary limits to the coverage, determined when you purchase it.

Stroke, heart attack, and severe injury from falls or car accidents can all lead to a need for either or both of these coverages. It is worth looking at both and making some choices about premiums and benefits.

Recession Cutbacks Can Hurt

The number of U.S. households with no life insurance protection rose from 22% in 2004 to 30% in 2010.

The recession is largely blamed for the decreases, as families nationwide are cutting back. Often, something as seemingly distant and intangible as life insurance is easier to drop than the day-to-day products and services we use, but where should life insurance fall on the priority list?

If funds are so tight that payments for cars, utilities and mortgages can hardly be met, then cuts do have to come from important budget items, but many households could benefit from a serious evaluation of their spending before dropping something as important as their financial backup system. Upon review, almost all clients who thought they were operating bare bones find enough waste or cushion to allow them some modicum of protection against the untimely loss of the family breadwinners.

Our financial professionals can help you with a financial evaluation and a look at different life insurance options that fit within a tight budget. Remember that not all life insurance policies are the same. Some, such as term life, are designed to protect young families from the loss of the main earner's income. Many of these can be bought for the price of a monthly pizza delivery.

Call to schedule a free review and information session with one of our professionals.

Life Insurance When You're Young

If you ask young people, especially those who are single and in their first job, what they spend their money on, few will say life insurance, but they should reconsider their allocations.

Life insurance is almost always a better deal when you are young and healthy, and its cash-in value under some policies increases over time.

In most cases, life insurance underwriters require medical information when determining your "insurability" – in other words, your eligibility for insurance, the type and amount of insurance the company is willing to sell you, and the cost you will pay for it. A key selling point for many types of policies is that they are guaranteed renewable, meaning the premium may change, but you will not have to provide evidence of insurability to keep the coverage.

A person's insurability tends to decline with age. It may be possible to obtain a policy with excellent terms today and keep that policy for many years, even as your health status declines. Over the course of many policies, an insured will be offered riders or enhancements to the policy. These are frequently provided at five-year or other periodic intervals and can be maximized the earlier you buy the policy.

Some people even buy a whole life policy for their children or grandchildren and transfer it to them when they graduate or begin their independent lives. Many of these policies build cash value that can be borrowed against if needed when the child grows older. Additionally, they permit the child to buy more insurance at standard premiums once they are adults.

Insuring Your Adult Child

The new healthcare law allows adult children up to age 26, whether financially dependent or not, to join, re-join or stay on their parent's healthcare plan. That includes employer-based and individual market plans.

There may be cost savings, but in some situations, a healthy young adult can get coverage in a high-deductible plan for somewhere just above $100. That might be a better alternative in cases where the parent's employer is raising rates to compensate for having to carry adult dependents.

The widely touted insurance exchanges won't be up and running for some time, and no one yet knows what they will look like or offer or what the premiums will be. For now, your best bet is probably to work with your insurance agent to find what the individual market offers and compare that to any employer-sponsored plan you are currently under.

Thank you for your referral.

If you're pleased with us, spread the word! We'll be happy tp give the same great service to all of your friends and business associates