

COMMUNICATING V-BID BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEES

The following communication strategies are best practices from other employers and current literature.

Best Practices

WHO SHOULD COMMUNICATE

- Communications to employees should come from both employers and health plan administrators. While health plan administrators may communicate about the specific benefits and cost sharing aspects of the plan, employers should communicate to employees about why the company is implementing a V-BID plan and how it will directly benefit them.
- Employer communications should come from both senior management and employee leaders. Messages from senior management demonstrate the initiative's importance to the company, while employee-leaders can help build employee buy-in by through peer-to-peer learning.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Educate employees on how their health plan can improve their health, prevent future health issues or complications, reduce their out-of-pocket spending, provide higher quality services at lower costs, and help them make the best health care decisions for themselves and their families.
- Address employee concerns about employers accessing their health information by highlighting that the employer will not have access to the employees' healthcare information and that the company is committed to protecting employee confidentiality.
- Emphasize the company's dedication to meeting its employees' health care needs.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE

- Utilize multiple communication channels and strategies to effectively communicate with a diverse range of employees, such as newsletters, infographics, videos, and postings to Intranet sites. In-person communication through "lunch and learns" or benefits fairs may be particularly effective.
- Customize communication materials to appeal to specific employee groups, such as different ages, genders and cultural groups within the organization. Interactive online benefits communication tools can help with customized messaging. Many health plans offer these to their employer clients, but you can also find standalone products for your HR department.
- Keep materials simple, clear and easy to read. Consider the health literacy of your audience and meet them at their level by incorporating visuals, using direct language, and providing definitions for complex topics and words.

WHEN TO COMMUNICATE

- Set a realistic timeline to develop and roll-out your communications plan. V-BID concepts are novel and it could take several months for employees to understand the proposed initiatives.
- Repeat messaging frequently. This helps employees pay attention to and understand the V-BID concepts, which may seem complex at first.
- Develop an evaluation tool to monitor employee satisfaction after the first year of operation and identify areas for improvement. Evaluation of the communication campaign should be ongoing.

Choosing Wisely®: Educating Consumers on Low Value Services

Choosing Wisely®, an initiative of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) foundation, promotes informed patient-provider communication to prevent use of unnecessary care and low-value services. Employers choosing to implement a V-BID plan should also consider pairing this plan with a Choosing Wisely campaign to provide their employees with patient-friendly materials on what care is best for them and the right questions to ask their physicians when presented with various healthcare decisions. This education promotes shared-decision making, which can reduce the use of low-value services and ultimately reduce healthcare costs for employers. For more information on the initiative, see page 45.