

County employees have been enjoying the free or reduced premiums on the High Deductible plan and the tax advantages of an HSA since 2009. Regardless of which stage of HSA ownership you're in, you'll benefit by understanding your plan and managing your account.

## STILL ON A PPO

Traditional PPO coverage isn't ideal for many county employees. If you're on the PPO and haven't taken a look at how the High Deductible plan can benefit you, this year is a great opportunity to review costs and benefits of each plan.

## NEW TO THE HDHP YEAR 1 THROUGH 3

If you're newer to HSA's there are a few things to remember

- 1. You're on a plan with two parts**
  - The High Deductible Plan – the insurance plan through PEHP or SelectHealth
  - The Savings Plan – County lump sum, wellness incentives, and your own pretaxed payroll deductions are deposited directly into your Optum HSA
- 2. You get network discounts.** When you use your medical benefits, present your medical plan ID card. It's often best to pay a portion of the bill instead of the full amount, because the network discount is applied when the claim is processed. Prescriptions need to be paid at the point of service, but providers (doctors, dentists, specialists, facilities) often let you pay a copay, then the remainder when you get your Explanation of Benefits (EOB).
- 3. Save for your future expenses.** Unlike a Flex Spending plan, the funds in your HSA are yours to keep and go with you from year to year. Save now for your future expenses.

## WHAT ALL HSA OWNERS SHOULD KNOW

If you have an HSA and understand the benefits, take a more active role.

- 1. Forbes calls your HSA “the crown jewel” of tax deferred accounts.** Take advantage of everything you can save by maximizing your contribution. Funds grow tax-free, contributions are tax-free (state, federal and FICA), and as long as you spend your funds on qualified medical expenses, they're not taxed.
  - 2019 limits are \$3,500 for single and \$7,000 for family. If you're over age 55, you can contribute an additional \$1,000.
- 2. Save now for your future.** The county lump sum contribution of \$600 for single and \$1,200 for family is deposited into your HSA the first few weeks in January, so you start the year with cash in your account. Don't let it stop there, though. You can earn additional HSA contributions by participating in wellness activities, and contribute your own pre-tax funds through a payroll deduction.
- 3. Optum offers investments.** Once your balance reaches \$2,100 you can invest your HSA dollars in mutual funds.
- 4. Review your account often.** Taking a few minutes every month to review your balance, look at your investments and check-in with your savings goals will do more than you think in the long run.