

## Charmed Health User Interviews

### Interviewed 6 users - overall themes

#### Emotions:

- 4/6 have an overall negative association with health insurance
- 3/6 express a sense of gratitude for having coverage
- 5/6 have feelings of anxiety and uncertainty about what actual coverage is
- 2/6 don't really use their coverage but feel like they have to have it
- 4/6 express feeling that you never really know what you are choosing even after you choose/aspects of the plan can change at any time

#### Motivations:

- Financial:
  - Everyone reported a sense that one HAS to buy health insurance or one could go broke without it
  - 2/6 reported thinking that the federal government now requires all Americans to have health insurance or face financial penalties
  - 1/6 mentioned employer-sponsored health insurance premiums are paid for with pre-tax dollars which is a benefit
  - 1/6 mentioned that because he has his own business, he can write his insurance cost off as a business expense
- Decision-making savviness:
  - 4/6 reported that the skills needed to decide on a health insurance plan are outside the scope of everyday decision-making. Why?
    - The language is really confusing
    - The concepts are confusing
    - There is a lot of uncertainty involved
    - Sense that companies want you to be confused
- After a user makes this purchase, they do not want to have to do again - it's not really a pleasurable experience
- Reputation of company is really important and can keep someone with their plan even if there is a cheaper option
- Inertia of having made the decision - don't want to go through it again AND of having made connections with doctors already and don't want to have to go through process of finding new doctors again

#### Words

Unexpected, Emergency ,Accident, Anxiety, Employer, Flexibility, Confusing, Ordeal, Complicated, fine print, tricky, deceiving, stressful

## **THEMES IN SPECIFIC CATEGORIES**

### **Overall emotions/associations with health insurance:**

- Gratitude. Lucky. X
- Fear x
- Uncertainty
- Complex
- Expensive
- Confusing x
- Annual stressor x

### **Current health insurance plan:**

- 4/6 employer-sponsored
- 1/6 through secondary marketplace (Obamacare)
- 1/6 DTC through Kaiser
- All staying with current plan
  - 1/6 it is the cheapest that also meets prescription drug needs
  - 5/6 mention the mental cost to switching that they want to avoid x
  - 2/6 mention ease of getting through employer
  - 2/6 mentions financial incentives
  - Multiple mention liking dr's and not wanting to lose that
  - Multiple mention not feeling like the other choices are really any different
- 4/6 mention importance of provider network

### **Pain points**

- Difficult to find a dr. you like who is in network
- Confusing language used on insurance websites
- Hard to navigate
- Hard to understand the real and important differences between plans
- Do not understand what is actually covered
- 2/6 do not use their coverage
- Some users see cost as but for majority 5/6 it's not their main concern
- Time and energy to weigh the pros and cons of the different plans.
- Hidden costs or plan restrictions

- Multiple steps to go through when narrowing down choices and making actual selections

#### **Decision-making process to select previous employer-sponsored plan:**

- Charts showing options
- Company reputation
- Word of mouth from trusted friends/family
- Network of doctors
- Cost - copay, deductible, premium costs - but most 5/6 willing to pay more for reputation, ease of use, larger network
- 1/6 mention talking to a company rep
- Tip the scales - extras like chiropractors, massage

#### **Improve decision making process:**

- Clarify differences between plans
- Clearly lay out the costs and implications under different scenarios
- Share more details about exactly what is covered

#### **Ever not have insurance? Why is insurance important?**

- 3/6 always have had insurance and the others who had gaps only had them for a short time
- 4/6 have important memories or stories about when they knew insurance was important or why it's important to them
- Everyone mentions its importance in the context of being an adult
- A sense that if you go without, your life could be destroyed
- Health insurance is security and safety.

#### **General decision-making process to buy this insurance online:**

- Ease of use is extremely important
- Some users will pay more if they feel the company makes the process super easy to buy online

- Majority of users prefer a quick and efficient experience that is fully online
- Users often do research on a company before buying insurance online
- Users also consider friends' and family members' opinions and stories before buying online

**Ever see self buying health insurance directly online?**

- None of the 5/6 users who currently have employer-sponsored plans or Obamacare would consider DTC.
- All site cost and convenience as reasons why they wouldn't switch.

**User 1:** 70 year old female in Newington, CT

**Household:** 2 adults

**Occupation:** Retired from state of CT 7 years ago

**Annual income range:** N/A is retired

**Overall emotions/associations with health insurance:**

- Gratitude. She has a lot of health issues and feels lucky to have an amazing plan that she takes full advantage of. Lucky to see as many specialists as she wants.

**Current health insurance plan:**

- Medicare plus the state of CT pays for a very generous supplement through United Healthcare
- Not many options for her within that plan aside from including/excluding dental but she wouldn't want options because what she has now is so generous
- The most important characteristic for her is flexibility - ability to see any provider she wants.
- If she could change anything about her current company would be to allow for claims to be submitted online.

**Decision-making process to select previous employer-sponsored plan/pain points:**

- Every year she would get a booklet with colored charts showing options for the coming year and can choose - Cigna, Oxford, or Anthem.
- But after multiple years, started to realize that Anthem has the biggest networks of doctors and customer service was the best, so she always went with it.
- In earlier days, cost was more important, but after having kids, she also needed access to a wide range of doctors. Choice and flexibility became really important.

- Paying more (within reason) was worth it for access to the network.
- She also appreciated the healthcare fairs for employees so she could have questions you could ask a real person face to face - helped to understand her options.
- Improve the process by clearly providing info on which doctors are in your network, what your premiums are, the claims procedure.

**Ever not have insurance? Why is insurance important?**

- Didn't have it after graduating college around age 21 and didn't feel she had a need for it, didn't have any health issues. Did not feel stressed about needing it.
- Within the year got health insurance through a job and then shortly thereafter got mono, so realized that she did need coverage.
- Also, soon had a health issue and had to go to the ER which made her realize she could get some serious bills if she didn't have insurance.
- Health insurance is security and safety.

**General decision-making process to buy other types of insurance online:**

- Bought travel insurance online.
- It was important for her to go with a reputable company so she did research in consumer reports to figure out the best company to go with.
- Wanted to make sure the plan she chose covered everything so she chatted online with a rep while looking at the website and read customer reviews to make sure it was legit.
- Generally feels more comfortable making an important purchase online if there is a chat feature or phone number so she can get questions answered before making a purchase.

**Ever see self buying health insurance directly online?**

- No. Her current situation is too good.

**Bottom line:**

- Biggest motivator with health insurance is access to a wide network. Flexibility is key.
- Has an emotional connection to her insurance - it's like a security blanket.
- Important to have human connection in person, over phone, or over chat to feel confident in making decisions.

**User 2:** 38 year old female in Portland, OR

**Household:** 3 (2 adults, 1 child) but only has insurance for herself

**Occupation:** Director at state health department

**Annual income range:** \$200,000+

**Overall emotions/associations with health insurance:**

- Discussing health insurance brings up fear and confusion for this user.
- Feels anxiety ('a tightening in her chest') at the thought of an unexpected medical need popping up for something not covered.

**Current health insurance plan:**

- Plan is provided through her employer.
- Stays with her current plan because her therapist takes it.
- Hard to find a dr. you like and doesn't want to go through that search again.

**Decision-making process to select current plan/pain points:**

- Was overwhelming, stressful, and confusing because all the plans seemed really similar.
- Employer provided a comparison worksheet which helped simplify the process.
- Still felt there could be something hidden that she didn't know about or couldn't anticipate.
  - She used copay, deductible, and premium costs to guide her, as well as company name recognition, and whether her current doctors were in network.
  - What really convinced her to select her current plan was that chiropractors and massage is covered.
- Will likely continue with same plan unless her current needs change (family planning)
- It's really important to her that women's health services and mental health services (talk therapy) are covered and that there is a wide network of doctors.

**Ever not have insurance? Why is insurance important?**

- Twice she's been between jobs without traditional plan but always made sure she was covered (once with COBRA and once she purchased a catastrophic plan).
- Didn't want to go without - she grew up with a single mom who always insisted that having health coverage was incredibly important so you don't end up bankrupt
- During these gaps in coverage, she just wanted the essentials for emergencies since she knew she would have employer sponsored care soon and could take care of routine medical issues at that time.

**General decision-making process to buy other types of insurance online:**

- Relies on word of mouth/company reputation a lot.
- If the website is easy to use and she can compare across a lot of options, and everything is explained in plain language, she is more likely to purchase a plan with them, even if it's more expensive.

### **Ever see self buying health insurance online?**

- No. Only if self employed or has a major medical need her employer plan couldn't cover but would be surprised to be in that predicament.

### **Bottom line:**

- Her emotions of anxiety around health insurance are heavily influenced by childhood experiences.
- Pain points are making comparisons across plans - it's too difficult.
- If buying insurance online, it needs to be easy to compare and use plain language.

**User 3:** 62 year old male in East Granby, CT

**Household:** 2 adults

**Occupation:** Home insurance inspector

**Household income:** <\$70,000

### **Overall emotions/associations with health insurance:**

- Feels anxiety and cringes when has to think about it.
- Has been self-employed for 10 years and all that time has been having to deal with acquiring his own insurance which has been an ordeal.

### **Current health insurance plan/anything to fix about the process:**

- Plan is provided through the secondary marketplace with CT's version of 'Obamacare' which is called Husky Health.
- Coverage is good but the network is very limited and when they find doctors they like, sometimes the doctors end up dropping the plan so they have to start over.
- Biggest pain points with the process to buy was that the website was unclear and hard to use. The wording was jargony and it was unclear how to navigate and where to go next. Being a government site, it felt very dated and clunky.

### **Decision-making process to select current plan:**

- Took a lot of time and energy to weigh the pros and cons of the different plans.
- Had to go through a lot of steps like entering tax information in order to understand qualifications for subsidies.

- Ultimately chose the plan with a lower deductible and reasonable copays - cost was the absolute most important but also needed to make sure they did have access to some doctors.

**Ever not have insurance? Why is insurance important?**

- When he was young, he didn't have it for a few years but started feeling like it was something adults needed and that he should get it.
- He was able to get insurance through his first real job and since then has always had insurance because his now wife has a very serious illness that requires medication that costs \$10k/month (for epilepsy).

**General decision-making process to buy other types of insurance online:**

- Looks at customer reviews and considers the reputation of the company and the product.
- Cost and affordability are key for his family.

**Ever see self buying health insurance online directly from a company?**

- No. He has previously considered blue cross blue shield/connecticare (private companies) but they have incredibly high costs. The costs would have to come down much more.

**Bottom line:**

- Cost is absolute number one consideration when comparing plans.
- For his family, medication costs are extremely important.
- Would appreciate an online purchasing experience that uses plain language and has an easy to navigate interface.

**User 4:** 41 year old male in New York, New York

**Household:** 2 adults

**Occupation:** Head of product

**Household income:** \$300,000+

**Overall emotions/associations with health insurance:**

- Complicated, fine print, tricky, deceiving, stressful.

**Current health insurance plan/anything to fix about the process:**

- Purchased current plan through employer.
- Isn't really sure what's covered because doesn't really use it that much but he assumes it's pretty standard coverage.
- Questions how much coverage he actually needs/how much it's worth it (aside from major catastrophic coverage).
- Doesn't really consider switching plans. Feels like once you commit you stay with one unless it's terrible or there are dramatically better options.

**Decision-making process to select current plan/pain points:**

- Confusing, unsettling process.
- Felt really arbitrary because all the plans seemed the same.
- Not a lot of choice - employer decided for him and gave 2-3 options and then he had to pick.
- Made his decision based mostly on costs and which providers would take the plan.
- Feels like it's extremely difficult to understand the nuances of the plans ('need a master's degree in health insurance to understand these plans').

**Ever not have insurance? Why is insurance important?**

- Remembers after college feeling like getting health insurance was one of those things you needed to do as an adult and got it as part of his first job.
- Has had gaps in coverage when took time off between jobs or was working for self.
- Probably wouldn't have been enticed to get it at any point because the return on investment just didn't seem worth it. Also wouldn't really know where to look for it.

**General decision-making process to buy other types of insurance online:**

- Bought auto insurance online.
- Was less complicated than health insurance, seemed more straightforward because there weren't as many options and considerations.
- Did some research on the company itself. Company reputation was important as well as customer reviews and input from friends and family on who they use.

**Ever see self buying health insurance online directly from a company?**

- No. SO much more accessible through his employer. Unless he worked for himself or there was a special medical consideration, he would continue buying through employer because of the ease and also the pre-tax benefits.

**Bottom line:**

- Confusion over what his current plan actually covers.
- Realizes he needs health insurance much but doesn't really use it much.
- Feels like there isn't really a true choice and doesn't understand the differences in these plans.

**User 5:** 40 year old male in Scarsdale, New York

**Household:** 4 (2 adults, 2 children)

**Occupation:** Director of wealth management services

**Household income:** \$500,000+

**Overall emotions/associations with health insurance:**

- Stressful, uncertain, feeling forced to pay more and more and can't do anything about it.
- Seems to get more expensive each year.

**Current health insurance plan/anything to fix about the process:**

- Has had his current plan through his employer for 8 years.
- Wouldn't change it because it works for his family (provides access to a lot of doctors, does not require referrals, and copays are relatively inexpensive).
- Is concerned with cost but always willing to pay more for good coverage and access to a good network of doctors.
- Gets frustrated that there are always hidden issues with health insurance. For example, needed special authorization to get a medication for his daughter.

**Decision-making process to select current plan/pain points:**

- When first joined his company, had just had a baby and had to make sure his whole family would be covered.
- Ultimately, his wife chose the plan because she has more expertise in this area (works as a lawyer for an employment benefits firm).
- Knew they wanted a PPO vs HMO because they wanted to be able to see a specialist without permission and see the doctors he wanted to see.

- The cost of copays was a deciding factor because being a family of 4 there are many more doctor visits than as a single person or a couple.
- He wishes that during the process, they would share more details about exactly what you're getting, and would be more transparent to the consumer.

### **Ever not have insurance? Why is insurance important?**

- Always had insurance because he always worked for an employer who offered it.
- Remembers when he knew it was important when he was 25 and shattered his pinky playing football and understood that you never know what's going to happen.

### **General decision-making process to buy other types of insurance online:**

- Bought auto insurance online through Geico
- In making that choice, ease of use for buying online was number 1 and price was second. Worth it to pay more to have a better experience online.
- Prefers to use a site that allows you to get a quote immediately instead of having to call someone. If you want an online experience it needs to be 100% online, otherwise why bother.

### **Ever see self buying health insurance online directly from a company?**

- No, unless it was significantly cheaper. Even though costs are going up on the current plan, it's been worth it.

### **Bottom line:**

- Feels like you need a special type of knowledge to really navigate these plans and understand the differences and implications.
- Is less sensitive to cost as other users. More concerned with ease of use.
- Doesn't want to have to ask permission to see the doctors and use the medications his family needs.

**User 6:** 42 year old male in Portland, OR

**Household:** 3 (2 adults, 1 child) but only has coverage for himself

**Occupation:** Independent contractor for environmental remediation

**Household income:** \$200,000+

**Overall emotions/associations with health insurance:**

- Boring thing that occasionally pops up
- Only thinks about it when he has to which is only about once a year for re-enrollment
- Thankful that he has decent coverage he doesn't need to think about and grateful his daughter is covered by his ex's plan

**Current health insurance plan/anything to fix about the process:**

- Has a private plan through Kaiser the only covers catastrophic incidents
- He has had plan 2 years and has never used it and rarely thinks about it because he's a healthy person

**Decision-making process to select current plan/pain points:**

- Never needed his own plan until he got divorced. Prior to that was on his employer's plan and then was on his ex's plan and it was something he never really had to think about.
- Probably wouldn't have been able to start his own business if he didn't already have coverage through his ex because he has a daughter and he always has to make sure she has good coverage.
- Current plan is cheapest plan that was originally offered. Since first purchasing, he does know of a slightly cheaper, comparable plan, but he likes Kaiser's reputation, his current plan is a known quantity, so he doesn't want to rock the boat and switch to another company.

**Ever not have insurance? Why is insurance important?**

- Always had insurance through an employer and then through his ex.
- Really never thought much about it until he got divorced.
- Even though he doesn't use it often, he mentions it is an 'adult' thing to have and he always has to make sure his kid is covered, even if he himself wouldn't worry too much about his own coverage.
- Even though he barely uses his coverage, he feels he has to have it because if there was an accident and he got hurt, he would end up in major debt without it. Also he thinks now the government requires some proof of coverage or you have to pay a penalty.

**General decision-making process to buy this insurance online:**

- Was super easy and took him under an hour (could have been quicker but he likes to take his time with these decisions)
- He did a side by side comparison of the cheapest plans based on premium and deductible costs and went with the cheapest plan.
- Cost was key because he doesn't use it so he doesn't want to pay a lot for something he essentially doesn't even use.
- Generally, he feels good with an online insurance purchase if he knows he's saving money and getting a good deal and the company has a good reputation.

**Bottom line:**

- Insurance for his kid is something that influences big decisions in his life (ex: whether to start own business).
- His main motivation for having health insurance is a fear of an unexpected event and having to pay a lot of money for that event.
- He had a good experience purchasing online from Kaiser and the inertia of being on the plan + their reputation keeps him staying even though he knows of a slightly cheaper plan.