

President's Report

Well, it's springtime in Michigan! One day you're in shorts & flip flops & the next day you're pulling on a sweater and grabbing an umbrella. One thing is certain...warmer days are ahead. What's uncertain is how our industry will be changing....again....possibly in the not too distant future. It might be time for all of us to re-read "Who Moved My Cheese" as we continue to adapt and evolve in this industry.

Since our last newsletter, we have held a successful Legislative Day and Professional Development Day, WMAHU had their expo, MDAHU is gearing up for theirs, we conducted our Member Satisfaction Survey and we just got a piece of legislation (the CE Carryover bill) through the Michigan House. You can read more about these activities later in this newsletter.

Survey Results

On behalf of the MAHU Board, we'd like to thank you for participating in our recent Member Satisfaction Survey. We saw an increase in the number of respondents as a percentage of membership...so thank you for providing your feedback! Some items of note that you told us:

1. You continue to receive valuable information and education from the association
2. Your locals continue to deliver great programs
3. You're finding greater satisfaction in your membership this year than last
4. You're reading this publication at a higher rate this year than last
5. Your top challenges include:
 - a. Commission compression
 - b. Regulatory/compliance issues
 - c. Overall health care/pharmacy costs
 - d. Medicare/Individual information and focus
 - e. Technology both in the marketplace and a means by which programming can be more effectively delivered

Addressing your Challenge – Commission Compression

We have heard your concerns about compensation loud and clear. We hear the same message nationally. While we understand your concerns, please know that federal anti-trust issues prevent the association from engaging in direct compensation dialog with carriers. Instead, the association is working very hard to create a stable marketplace where agents & brokers can continue to provide valuable assistance to consumers. Legislative efforts include trying to remove commissions from the MLR calculation. In addition, promotion of education, licensing and certification programs are continually being offered as ways for agents to increase their portfolio of revenue producing products and possibly charge a consulting fee for services rendered. The need for long term care protections is rapidly growing with the Baby Boomer generation approaching this time in life. This was one reason MAHU offered a full CE track at the recent Professional Development Day dealing with just this. One thing is certain, while there are compensation reductions occurring in some areas, there are new opportunities to increase revenue in others.

Addressing your Challenge – Regulatory & Compliance Issues

This is the absolute best time to be a member of NAHU, the nation's expert resource for benefit professionals. With all that is moving & shaking in DC, our national staff and state and local board members continually work with legislators and regulators to help shape possible future changes to the ACA. While there is still work to do, the goals are:

1. To ensure that the marketplace can remain as stable as possible
2. That consumers have access to insurance coverage that meets their risk needs while not being so expensive that it's unaffordable
3. That agents and brokers remain integral to the overall delivery system

NAHU continues to provide tremendous member services as part of the annual dues we pay. To name a few, NAHU:

1. Advocates for us legislatively and through regulatory channels
2. Provides answers to our tough questions through Compliance Corner
3. Delivers education and certification opportunities through a host of webinars, communication pieces and training/certification programs.
4. Sends the Washington Update each Friday afternoon which summarizes the week's activities.

Access to webinars about the changing landscape of regulation and compliance, Compliance Corner and Washington Updates alone is worth the cost of our dues. Are you taking full advantage of them? If not, please do so. You won't be disappointed!

Challenge – Medicare/Individual Market Focus

Seems we tend to focus on group markets; missing some of the needs of those who serve these individual markets. In the coming weeks and months, you'll begin to see more activity on this front. A subset of MAHU's Board has been meeting on this topic and putting together some ideas to take action. If you are, or know someone who would be, interested in sharing your thoughts and ideas on MAHU can improve in this area, please reach out to me at krista@gremelgroup.com or at 616-340-0597 or any member of our subgroup (Michelle Howard, Keith Wright, Erika Sklar and Cathy Cooper). We are seeking to assemble an advisory group comprised of agents who serve these markets to help shape the future of how MAHU can better support agents in these areas.

More to follow

We will continue to address your challenges over time. In the meantime, we hope you continue to participate in your local meetings. I'm sure you've listened to an amazing speaker who gave you some new ideas about your business and the services you provide. The work of the association is great and it gets done with many hands. Consider lending your help and assistance to the cause. It doesn't take a massive commitment of time to make a difference. If you have associates in your office who are not members, please share with them the value you derive from your membership. All of the tools and resources of NAHU are available for a paltry \$1.07 per day! I'll bet you spend more than that on your morning coffee. I think you'll agree that membership has its privileges.