



Independent Colleges and Universities Benefits Association

Seven years ago, Rollins College, a 1,700-student, 680-employee private

liberal arts institution located in Winter Park, Florida, was approached with a novel idea. That idea was to gather together as many private colleges as possible throughout the state of Florida to create a benefits consortium in order to pool purchasing power and reduce soaring healthcare costs. Facing a huge rate increase from its current benefits provider, the decision to take part in this cooperative was a no-brainer for Rollins. And today the college, along with 11 other institutions, is reaping the rewards of the power in numbers.

The consortium, called the Independent Colleges and Universities Benefits Association (ICUBA), operates with the purpose of “pooling the purchasing power of its member schools to reduce the associated costs of insurance, administrative fees, broker commissions and consulting fees,” and enables member institutions to self-fund their healthcare benefits on a nonprofit basis. Membership is open to any member of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida or Florida Council of Independent Schools.

There are currently 7,400+ employees from 12 institutions covered in the medical plans offered by ICUBA. All 12 ICUBA institutions share insurance costs so that member schools, regardless of size, are protected from unexpected annual premium rate increases. In fact, the consortium’s overall average per member per month cost has remained below trend for the past six years.

ICUBA’s vast and varied services make membership an attractive option for Florida’s small, private colleges (most of which could not afford to offer these kinds of benefits on their own). Among ICUBA’s offerings are a 24-hour nurse line; FSA, HRA and dependent care spending account options; retiree coverage; discounts on wellness and alternative medicine programs; 100% cost coverage for preventative services; disease management programs; dental and vision coverage; low-cost, no-deductible prescription drug coverage; life and disability insurance; and high-end employee assistance program benefits for all eligible employees (even if they are not enrolled in a medical plan).

Participating institutions have complete control over their specific plans, deciding which of the four available plans to offer, when new employees are eligible to participate in the plan, how much to contribute monetarily to the plan, and whether or not to offer “sensitive” benefits like domestic partner coverage.

Maria Martinez, assistant vice president for human resources and risk management at Rollins College, has nothing but good things to say about the college’s experiences with ICUBA. “Rollins has reaped tremendous rewards from its membership in ICUBA,” she says. “We’ve been able to not only design our own benefits plan, but also evolve it over the years to meet the changing needs of the college and its employees. Rollins, on its own, never would have been able to offer employees the range of services we can offer through ICUBA.”

To learn more about the Independent Colleges and Universities Benefits Association, visit <http://icuba.org/>.

Knowledge Center

In CUPA-HR’s Knowledge Center, you’ll find several examples of successful higher ed collaborations/consortia and shared services models. Visit <http://www.cupahr.org/shared>.