

Agent Exchange

Rating Agency Affirms Regence's Financial Strength

Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah is financially strong and well-positioned to meet its members' needs, according to A.M. Best, a well-known financial rating agency. The agency has rated Regence with an A- which is considered "excellent" on the scale.

This affirmation of Regence's ratings and financial strength is even more compelling considering A.M. Best's generally negative outlook for the health insurance sector as a whole and recent downgrades of some other health plans. The rating affirmation from A.M. Best is one more indicator that Regence's performance is solid and well-positioned to serve our communities over the long term.

As A.M. Best describes it, "The Financial Strength rating opinion addresses the relative ability of an insurer to meet its ongoing insurance obligations. The rating is based on a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative evaluation of a company's balance sheet strength, operating performance and business profile."

While this rating is indicative of Regence's financial strength overall, continued attention to operating expense is a big factor. As a not-for-profit health plan, our philosophy is to make "just enough" money to serve our members' needs. Clearly, we have a responsibility as stewards of our members' premium dollars to manage resources wisely and judiciously so they are available when our members need them.

That's easier when the economy is financially strong. However, when the overall economy is weak, maintaining our financial strength becomes more challenging. Our members are counting on us to achieve the right balance as we stringently manage our financial resources to benefit our members, our company and our communities.

The 2009 Utah Legislative Session Produced Several Bills Which are Impacting the Way Regence Does Business

Universal applications for individual and small group (2-50) products

The latest versions of both applications, along with cover sheets and the Authorization for Use and Disclosure of Personal Health Information, are posted on the Agent and Employer Web sites. The individual application is also posted in the "Shop Now" link on www.regence.com. These forms are identifiable by the notation in the lower right hand corner.

A complete individual application will consist of the (a) Regence cover sheet, (b) Utah Individual Health Insurance Application and c) the Authorization for Use and Disclosure of Personal Health Information.

In the future a coversheet may be added to the small group application. Until that time, the two required forms for application are the Utah Small Employer Health Insurance Application and the Regence Authorization for Use and Disclosure of Personal Health Information.

Effective January 1, 2010, agents must comply with the requirement to provide the producer compensation disclosure. A space for this is provided on the individual application, and one will be added to the Group Master Application for small groups. Compensation includes commissions, fees, awards, overrides, bonuses, contingent commissions, loans, stock options, gifts, prizes or any other form of valuable consideration. The applicants will acknowledge the following statement with their signature: *"I have received written disclosure that the producer will receive compensation from the insurer or a third party administrator for the placement of insurance, including the amount or type of compensation."*

Health Insurance Coverage in State Contracts

Contractors who contract with the following state entities on or after July 1 are required to offer "qualified health insurance" coverage to the contractor's eligible employees and their dependents if the prime contract value is \$1.5 million or greater or \$750,000 for a subcontract:

- Department of Environmental Quality
- Capitol Preservation Board
- Department of Natural Resources
- Division of Facilities Construction and Management
- Utah Department of Transportation
- Public Transit Districts

Regence underwriters and actuaries will assist groups in providing a statement of actuarial equivalency. Please contact your sales representative for assistance.

Mental Health Parity Act and Other Changes Effective October 15, 2009

Mental Health Parity

The Mental Health Parity Act (or the “Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008”) was signed into law on October 3, 2008, and the Federal Mental Health Parity (MHP) law becomes effective October 3, 2009.

The MHP law applies to group health insurers, to the fully insured, and to self insured ERISA groups of 51 or more employees that provide mental health/substance use disorder benefits. The Act does not require health plans to provide mental health/substance use disorder benefits; however, if these benefits are provided they must be at parity with the group’s medical and surgical benefits, so that coverage is paid the same as any other condition and any maximums and limits that may have applied, must now be removed.

The effective date for new groups will be October 16, 2009. The benefit will be enhanced for our existing groups at their renewals beginning November 1, 2009. Prior to renewal a group may be contacted to verify the number of full- and part-time employees.

Care Management

Regence has a comprehensive program of Mental Health and Chemical Dependency benefit management, and we actively manage these benefits today. If one of your groups is concerned about access to care, cost management, or how Regence can help them, please contact your sales representative.

Michelle’s Law

Michelle’s Law allows full-time college students covered by a parent’s health insurance plan to maintain their coverage for up to 12 months, while taking a medical leave from school or while changing to a part-time student status due to medical necessity, certified by a physician. The extension only applies if loss of student status is the reason for losing coverage. This law will affect only those Utah self-funded plans with “student eligibility” language in their contracts.

Agents and ASC groups impacted by this law will be contacted by their sales representative. For more information, go to www.ut.regence.com/agent/communication/. An employer notice regarding Mental Health Parity will be posted on the Employer Web site at www.ut.regence.com/employer/communication/.

Talk to Your Employer Groups About InterMSM Short Term Medical

Regence Life and Health's (RLH) InterM short term medical plan is a valuable tool for employers. Even though employers offer comprehensive medical plans, not all employees qualify. InterM helps bridge that gap until employees do qualify for full coverage.

InterM Advantages: Forget about networks, InterM allows you to visit the physician or hospital of your choice. Anyone with a mailing address in Oregon, Utah and Idaho are eligible to apply. In addition, premiums can be paid monthly via electronic check or most major credit cards.

Employer/Employee Benefits: Although InterM is an individual product it provides advantages to employer groups and employees. Contractors/temporary workers as well as permanent employees during their probationary period are often ineligible for permanent comprehensive coverage. InterM provides coverage for accidents and illnesses to this group of employees until permanent coverage becomes available. For employees separating from the company or dependents who age off the employer's medical plan, InterM also provides temporary coverage until permanent coverage is obtained.

Agent Advantages: InterM provides both rich commissions at a flat 20% and an easy enrollment process. Online enrollment with agency auto-fill in the application ensures proper commission credit. RLH provides the URL for the agent's and employer's website. Email Delilah Kohler for details and instructions: ddkohle@regence.com.

For additional information contact your sales representative or go online at www.regencelife.com

New Process for Group Membership Forms

On June 22, Regence implemented a new process that will affect how Membership documents are processed and stored. All types of Membership documents will be imaged and routed for more timely and efficient handling. In order to expedite the process, barcodes have been added to the bottom of the forms for our new products (e.g. Application for Enrollment/Change, Waiver Form, Group Master Application and various affidavits and authorizations).

If you have a current supply of forms without the barcodes, we will continue to accept them. However, for more efficient handling of your clients' enrollment forms, you are encouraged to transition to the new forms as soon as possible. Those with barcodes have been added to the "Forms" section of the agent and employer web sites at www.ut.regence.com, and they will be available at the Regence Sales office.

Beginning immediately, please submit all group Membership documents to the following P.O. Box, email address or fax number.

Paper mail:	P.O. Box 1200 Portland, OR 97207-1200
Fax Number:	1 (866) 303-5117
Email:	UnitID2004@regence.com

For premium payments please follow the current mailing process. If you have questions, contact your sales representative.

Online Tools and Resources Help Regence Providers Support the Member Experience

Regence offers several online tools and resources to assist our physicians, other health care professionals, and facilities in providing service to our members. These tools enable our providers and their office staff to perform administrative tasks more efficiently, giving them more time for patient care.

Tools available on our public provider Web site (www.ut.regence.com) include:

- Care management options
- Medical pre-authorization
- Network provider directories
- Administrative Manual
- Reimbursement, Medical, Medication and other policies
- The ConnectionSM and The Connection OnlineSM newsletters

Within our secure Web site, providers can:

- Check claims and payment status
- Check member eligibility and benefits
- Review and respond to comments their patients have made about them
- Enhance their individual provider profile, including philosophy of care, practice areas of expertise, appointment availability, patient demographics, awards and other distinctions-which members can view on **myRegence.com**



Again, we believe giving providers and their office staff good web tools, allows for more valuable patient care.

Introducing our Small and Mid-size Group Sales Team

Congratulations to Jennifer Morgan Stark and Arsen Mkrtchyan as our newest small group and mid-size sales executives. Also congratulations to Amy Gregorcy as she assumes her new role as an associate account executive.

Many of you may know Jennifer, as she just completed her tenth year at Regence, most recently as a sales executive in our Individual Sales area. At four years with Regence, Arsen brings expertise from our medical services and small group renewal area. Also at four years, Amy started her Regence career in customer service, later moving to support the large group services team.

As you can see, although new to their current positions, Jennifer, Arsen and Amy bring years of experience and great technical skills. You will find them a great asset in working with Regence.

Regence Accepts On-line Bill Pay

Regence now accepts on-line payments, from a group or individual's bank, with no service charge.

Most banks offer their customers a convenient on-line payment feature free of charge, typically referred to as "Bill Pay." On-line Bill Pay payments reduce the risk of a payment being lost in the mail, misdirected or even targeted by theft.

A bank's bill payment feature typically asks for the account number, address and amount. This information is available on a member's ID card or on a group's bill.

Encourage the use of this banking feature with your clients and have them take advantage of its ease, safety and timeliness.

Economy Makes Employee Assistance Programs More Important Than Ever

Managers and workers alike frequently face tough decisions, that can affect productivity and morale, especially in today's economy. That's where Employee Assistance Programs can help. Whether it's a manager announcing a layoff or an employee facing home foreclosure, such increasingly common stresses call for outside expertise. That's why Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah, in partnership with Reliant Behavioral Health, is offering its members, who are insured through their employer, an Employee Assistance Program, as an option for benefit plans.

"Regence believes that good health is more than just check-ups, exercise and good diet," said Julia Poduch, Vice President of Product Development for Regence. "It's also about helping employees address concerns that affect their professional and personal life. It helps them be healthier and enables employers to create a more productive and satisfying workplace."

According to a study by the National Mental Health Association, "presenteeism"-showing up for work but being less productive-costs more than \$200 billion annually in the U.S. for a business, this might mean giving up 5 to 12% of its workforce's productivity each day. The goal of the Employee Assistance Program is to give employees and employers tools to resolve their problems, before they reach a crisis which lessens productivity and ultimately impacts the bottom line.

Services offered through Regence's Employee Assistance Program include:

- Face-to-Face counseling and 24 hour crisis help line
- Free and discounted legal services
- Will preparation
- Critical incident stress debriefing
- Supervisor consultation
- Department of Transportation evaluations
- Free and discounted financial services
- Parenting services
- Adult and elder care services and resources



For more information about Regence's Employee Assistance Program, visit www.MyRBH.com and enter "RegenceEAP" as the access code.

Regence Caring Foundation for Children Sponsors free Children's Health Workshop

The U.S. Surgeon General has declared that oral disease has reached epidemic levels among low-income kids in the United States.

The Regence Caring Foundation for Children noticed, and sponsored a free children's health workshop at the Lied Boys and Girls Club, in Salt Lake City on May 28, 2009.



Regence Caring Foundation for Children staff, a dental hygienist and a Regence Wellness Coordinator were on hand at the Club to promote good oral health and nutritious eating to 40 energetic kids. The children, ages 6-12, participated in interactive workshops and educational activities. They also received toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss and a "Guide to Good Dental Health" with tips about how to maintain a healthy smile.

In addition, the Regence Caring Foundation for Children donated one week's worth of healthy snacks, which was a welcome treat for a Boys and Girls Club facing empty shelves due to a lack of donated food.

Regence employees have been great contributors to the foundation, dedicated to providing free oral health care and education to Utah and Idaho children. To find out more about the Foundation, or to make a donation, please call 1 (888) 589-KIDS or visit our Web site at www.caringfoundationforchildren.org.

Regence Caring Foundation Annual Gala

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

Starring

Kenny Loggins & Jim Messina

Grand America Hotel

Help 1,000 Utah children in desperate need of dental care.

Be a sponsor of the 17th annual Regence Caring Foundation for Children Fundraising Gala.

Sponsorship Levels:

Underwriter: \$6,000

Reception sponsor: \$5,000

Table sponsor: \$2,000

Individual VIP ticket: \$200

Contact Regence's Kathleen Pitcher Tobey at 801.333.5575



Did You Know... For the fifth year in a row, Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah is the sponsor of Utah State University's quarterly Sunrise Session? The event is a breakfast lecture series held quarterly and designed to highlight timely and cutting-edge research conducted at Utah State University.

At the events, faculty and students share their research with alumni, community, and business leaders from the Salt Lake area. Held in Salt Lake City, these early-morning presentations detail how USU research is addressing pressing issues, such as the obesity epidemic and hearing loss in children. All are invited to attend these events at no charge, thanks to the sponsorship by Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah.

At each breakfast, Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah President Scott Ideson opens the event by welcoming the guests and introducing USU President Stan Albrecht. Dr Albrecht then introduces the program.

"Each Sunrise Session deals with issues that are critical to all of our futures, and that is why Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah values these Sunrise Sessions and supports, with our time and resources, these types of gatherings," Ideson said.

Please consider attending the next Utah State University Sunrise Session. Contact USU for more information.

If you are a newly appointed Agent, it is **mandatory** to attend **both** group and individual product training within 90 days of receiving your writing numbers.

If you need to brush up on our new products, these trainings are ideal for you as well!

Group Product Training

August 12
September 9
October 14

Individual Product Training

August 13
September 10
October 8

9:00 AM

Meet in the Sales Lobby
Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah
2890 East Cottonwood Parkway
Salt Lake City, Utah

RSVP to Desiree.Dudleston@Regence.com