

Insurance Matters

Be Prepared For The Real Cost Of Accidents And Illnesses

(NAPSA)—Unexpected accidents and illnesses are more common and expensive than people think. According to the 2011 Aflac WorkForces Report, conducted by leading research firm Harris Interactive, 51 percent of workers are not at all or not very prepared to pay for out-of-pocket expenses associated with an unexpected serious illness or accident.

This alarming statistic underscores how too many Americans struggle with economic stress and would be financially challenged by an unforeseen health problem.

The study revealed that few U.S. workers believe an accident or illness will affect them or a family member. “Only 19 percent of employees think it’s likely they or a family member will be diagnosed with a chronic illness like heart disease,” said Audrey Tillman, Aflac’s executive vice president of Corporate Services. “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tells us heart disease is a major cause of disability in the U.S. Every 25 seconds an American has a coronary event, according to the American Heart Association. Bottom line: Everyone needs to be prepared.”

According to the National Safety Council, more than 25 million Americans suffered accident-related disabling injuries in 2008. The economic impact of fatal and nonfatal unintentional disabling injuries, including medical expenses and lost wages, was more than \$700 billion.

How can you better protect yourself? Tillman has some tips to help handle the unexpected:

1. Be aware of your finances. Almost one-third (31 percent) of workers have less than \$500 in savings to cover emergency expenses. Forty-four per-



Nearly 6 in 10 (59%) U.S. workers don't have a financial plan for dealing with unexpected life challenges or events.

cent of workers would have to borrow money from family or friends, tap retirement savings or use a credit card to get by.

2. Discuss insurance options with your employer. While many employers offer major medical insurance, voluntary—or supplemental—insurance is something to think about. Voluntary insurance can be a safety net for families and individuals because the cash benefits help pay for out-of-pocket expenses that major medical insurance is not designed to cover. Adding voluntary insurance, like a critical illness or an accident policy, is a smart and cost-effective supplement to a benefits package.

3. Don't think you're an exception. A surprising result of this study was that most U.S. workers don't think it's extremely or very likely that they'll have a medical emergency or be diagnosed with a chronic illness. Only 13 percent believe it is extremely or very likely that they will need long-term care.

To learn about how to better protect yourself and your family against the unknown, visit www.AflacWorkForcesReport.com.