



How to be an insurance advocate

for your international students

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Presenter Introductions



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Who Is Here?

- Which international population do you work with (F, J scholars, J students, both)?
- Do you work at a private or public institution?
- Who is with a 4-year institution, those in a 2-year institution, others?
- Who determines your insurance policies (ISSS office, health office, legal, other?)



Agenda

01

**Insurance
Overview**

02

**Advocacy
Basics**

03

Discussion

Insurance Overview

So you don't have to feel like this >>>
anymore when you talk about
insurance!



Do international students need insurance?

Yes! Healthcare costs in the US are very high, and insurance is an important part of keeping costs manageable for students.

But here are other important things to consider:

- F-1 students (and F-2 dependents) have no government-mandated insurance requirements - so these students will follow state or school requirements, if present.
- J-1 visa holders (and J-2 dependents) have minimum insurance requirements set by the US State Department.
- Other populations, such as OPT students or dependents, may have limited insurance options even if the school offer an insurance plan.

The ACA Impact



What is the ACA?

Main features: unlimited lifetime maximum, no pre-existing condition exemption, wellness/preventative care and maternity covered.



Requirements

Every school has to look at their student population and decide what makes the most sense and balance cost and benefits.

Compliant vs. Comparable

The primary difference between these two plan types is where the claims are filed.



Cost Considerations

ACA compliant plans are typically very expensive and might have more coverage than the average student needs.



Other Options for International Students



ACA Comparable

These plans will have similar benefits to an ACA compliant plan but will be more affordable.



Student-Focused Plans

These plans have been developed with international students in mind, and allow you to custom build benefits to your population.



Major Medical Plans

Popular options for families who need longer, more comprehensive coverage. Typically they provide worldwide coverage - and some allow dependents to enroll on their own.



Travel Medical Insurance

Not to be confused with “travel insurance,” these plans can be good options for short term scholars, study abroad students, and dependents. Typically there is no student visa requirements to be eligible..

Important Terms to Know

Deductible

The amount you must pay out of pocket before the insurance company will begin paying towards any covered expenses.

Co-Pay

A set fee for a specific visit that you must pay out of pocket before insurance will pay for your eligible expenses.

Coinsurance

A percentage of what the insurance will pay to cover your health care cost after any deductibles or co-pays have been paid.

Policy Maximum

The maximum amount an insurance company will pay for eligible expenses; might be per lifetime, per certificate period, or per illness/injury.

Premium

The actual cost of your insurance plan. The higher the premium, the higher the coverage.

“URC”

Usual, Reasonable and Customary is the average cost for a particular treatment in a geographic area.

Waivers: How they Impact Your Students

Your Waiver Process Is Important

But here are other important things to consider:

- Make sure who can and cannot waive, think through your different populations.
- Determine what benefits you want your student population to have (and if you have J's make sure to include there requirements as well)
- Oftentimes your broker or carrier can help you with the process, however it may be advisable to mandate coverage on a group plan to control for adverse selection.

**What are
your
challenges?**



Common Challenges

1. Cost
2. Understanding Coverage
3. Limited Network
4. Language Barrier
5. Initial Coverage for Pre-existing Conditions
6. Claim Procedures
7. Maintaining Eligibility
8. Changes in Visa Status
9. Annual Coverage Limits



Advocacy Basics

The Basics of Advocacy



01

Knowledge

Take time to learn and gather information.



02

Preparation

Compile what you've learned and establish relationships.



03

Action

Have the hard conversations. Elevate student voices. Share your experience.

KNOWLEDGE

- **KNOW** the government insurance requirements for different populations.
- **KNOW** the institutional insurance requirements for different populations.
- **KNOW** the populations you are serving and their unique needs.
- **KNOW** the basics of your school's insurance plan (if they offer one) and the waiver requirements.
- **KNOW** the history and culture of your institution in regards to health insurance for students.
- **KNOW** who is making the decisions.

PREPARATION

- **Compile** your knowledge into useful, digestible data.
- Every time you have a conversation with a student who's been impacted by insurance policy, **write it down**. Ask them to email you the details. Keep track of the trends.
- **Focus groups** or surveys.
- **Collect data and information** from peer institutions, insurance companies, NAFSA listservs, and conferences.
- Meet with insurance brokers to **understand your students' options**.
- **Build relationships** with stakeholders and decision makers.
- Encourage **student involvement** and elevate student voices.

ACTION

- This will look different depending on the level of advocacy - all of it matters!
- Present the **student and staff concerns** to stakeholders and decision makers.
- Present your **solution** to these concerns.
- Don't give up.

A note about advocacy and action: *It starts small.* Not all advocacy has to end in a conversation with the decision makers. Sometimes, the conversations with the students are just as important and can be the first step to seeing change.



Let's Talk!

Tell us your stories and share your
advocacy tips.

