

2021 Health Benefits Employer Survey Results

Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) released its annual [survey](#) of employer-sponsored health insurance, finding that approximately 155 million people receive their health insurance through their employer and 91% of workers are employed by a firm that offers health benefits to at least some of its workers. The survey of 1,700 small to large employers shows annual family premiums for employer-sponsored health insurance rose 4% to an average \$22,221, with workers paying an average \$5,969. The average cost of single coverage was \$7,739, with employees paying an average of \$1,299.

The report found the average contribution for family coverage by workers at small employers (from 3 to 199 workers) is larger than those at large employers (more than 200 workers), 37% compared to 24%. One-third of workers for smaller employers must contribute more than half of the cost of premiums for family coverage, compared to 5% of covered workers at larger employers. Eight percent of workers, including 20% of those at small employers, are in a plan with a worker contribution of \$12,000 or more for family coverage.

The survey found that there were changes to health benefits that were related to the COVID-19 pandemic, with nearly two-thirds of employers with at least 50 workers indicating changes related to telemedicine. Half reported additional promotion of their telemedicine benefits to workers and 31% expanded coverage for additional modes of telemedicine. In addition, nearly a quarter expanded the places where telemedicine could be delivered and the number or types of telemedicine providers. Those employers also reported making changes to their wellness programs. The most common changes involved expanding online counseling services, adapting existing programs to better meet the needs of remote workers, and adding a new digital program such as an app.

Sixty-four percent of covered workers, including 21% of workers for small employers and 82% for large employers, are enrolled in self-funded plans. There was a substantial increase in the number of small employers using a level-funded plan, 42% this year compared to 13% last year. A level-funded plan combines a self-funded component with stoploss coverage which limits the employer's liability by employee or on an aggregate basis and transfers a substantial share of risk to the insurer. Gary Claxton, one of the KFF report's authors, says this is a trend worth watching. "Obviously they are very popular, whether they will be stable over time is something we'll have to see."

The online briefing of KFF's survey of employer-sponsored insurance is [here](#). Download the full report [here](#).