

New Lower Cost Health Insurance Now Available to North Carolina Individuals and Families from Golden Rule

by Business-Wire

Budget-conscious health plans include health savings accounts and special Saver options

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--UnitedHealthcare's Golden Rule Insurance Company, a leader in the individual health insurance market for 60 years, announced today that it will begin offering a wide range of affordable health plan choices in North Carolina for individuals and families not covered by employer plans.

Golden Rule's product portfolio includes health savings account (HSA) plans, other high deductible plans and more traditional co-pay plans. "Saver" options within each type of plan feature Golden Rule's lowest premiums and are designed for people who thought they could not afford health insurance until now.

The "Savers" provide customers with protection from the more costly medical expenses that can break a family's budget, like hospital confinements, outpatient surgeries or CAT scans. Premium costs are lowered by limiting the amount of coverage for the more routine expenses, like doctor visits.

In addition, Golden Rule is able to provide its customers significant discounts on medical care through UnitedHealthcare's network of more than 19,000 physicians and 194 hospitals in North Carolina as well as an extensive national network of healthcare providers and facilities.

"Golden Rule understands that most Americans struggle with health care costs, especially hardworking individuals and families who have to buy their own health insurance," Richard A. Collins, Golden Rule CEO said. "We believe that North Carolinians will find that Golden Rule offers a choice of lower cost, high quality health plans along with a strong dedication to customer service and prompt payment of claims."

"North Carolinians who do not have health insurance available through their employers have a critical need for affordable health insurance," said Austin Pittman, CEO for UnitedHealthcare of North Carolina. "The scarcity of such insurance up until now is a likely contributor to our state's large number of uninsured children. These new health plans from Golden Rule are priced to meet the needs of working people."

"Golden Rule looks forward to serving our new customers in North Carolina and we are pleased to be doing business in the state," Collins added.

Golden Rule helped pioneer the health savings account (HSA) which combines a high deductible insurance plan with a tax-favored savings account. Golden Rule customers typically save 45-55 percent or more in premiums by choosing a health savings account plan over a more traditional plan. In addition, HSAs offer triple tax advantages: the savings go in tax deductible, grow tax deferred and can be withdrawn tax free as long as they are used for qualified medical expenses including vision and dental.

Today, 40 percent of Golden Rule customers are covered by HSA plans and, as of June 30, 2006, its customers had accumulated more than \$170 million in their health savings accounts. Importantly, a third of Golden Rule HSA buyers in 2006 were previously uninsured.

In addition to North Carolina, Golden Rule currently offers health insurance in 28 other states and is rated "A" (Excellent) by A.M. Best, and "A" (Strong) by Standard & Poor's, independent rankings that indicate financial strength and stability.

For more information about Golden Rule health insurance products and services, consumers can call 1-800-974-4472, visit www.goldenrule.com or contact a local North Carolina insurance broker who offers Golden Rule health plans.

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