

Health Insurance Options

Question:

Currently, I work for a travel nurse company and so far for my second contract, I have been satisfied. What I want to know is if I go with another company or two as some nurse's do, can I keep my insurance with my original company, or what do I do?

Reply:

This is a good question and health insurance is a prominent topic. Many people are finding themselves without insurance for one reason or another. Fortunately, as a traveler, you have many options. The following options are a few of those options and their pros and cons.

Switch insurance companies every time

One of the most obvious options is to switch insurance companies each time you work for another company that provides different health insurance. If you are fairly young and just need basic coverage for emergencies, this plan may work for you. Otherwise, switching insurance companies so often can be hectic and of little benefit to you, especially when many companies have a waiting period of 30 to 60 days before your coverage is effective.

Stay with one company

If you find an insurance company with insurance you like, you could stay with that agency in order to maintain their insurance. This option works well as long as you are extremely flexible and willing to be limited to the agencies' assignment selection.

Get independent insurance

Another option is to find your own independent health insurance that you pay for on your own. The coverage may be a little more expensive since you won't have the advantage of a group rate. However, most travel nursing agencies will reimburse you for all or part of your insurance expenses. This option can work well as long as you educate yourself on what to look for in an insurance company. Many insurance companies sound great on the surface, but aren't really great when you read the fine print or try to use them.

Go COBRA

Finally, one of my favorite options is that of going COBRA. At the end of an assignment with a company, you will be given the option to continue their insurance coverage of up to 18 months. You pay for it like independent insurance, you still have the advantage of the group rate. You pay whatever the company pays for the insurance. You don't have to switch companies and other companies will still reimburse you for the coverage you are paying for. One, traveler, Sandy, says she keeps her COBRA insurance with the

same company. When the coverage is about to expire she takes another assignment with the travel agency that she originally got the COBRA insurance from and then she is good for another 18 months.

Note:Question is from Kristen