

Louisiana Department of Insurance
Consumer Advocacy and Medicare Update


Ron C. Henderson Deputy Commissioner
 Office of Consumer Advocacy

James J. Donelon
 Commissioner of Insurance

Volume 5, Issue 12
December 2014



Our monthly newsletter addresses consumer insurance topics as well as timely information on issues affecting senior citizens in Louisiana.



To find out if Consumer Advocacy will be in your area or to request a speaker for your organization or group, call (225) 219-0619 or send an email to consumeradvocacy@ldi.la.gov

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please send an email to the following address with "REMOVE FROM CONSUMER ADVOCACY MAILING LIST" in the subject line.
public@ldi.la.gov

Turning 50

Middle-aged Americans find themselves in the "sandwich generation," having both aging parents and adult children. They are often serving as primary caregivers for their aging parents and are shouldering more of their adult children's financial responsibilities.

To help consumers get smart about insurance needs for age 50 and beyond, the Louisiana Department of Insurance encourages consumers to access the National Association of Insurance Commissioners' (NAIC) *Get Ready Resources for Turning 50*. The resource kit includes tips and tools, such as challenging questions to consider and a Take Action Now checklist of things to do to ensure unforeseen insurance needs do not get in the way of financial stability.

- If you don't have life insurance, now may be the time to consider buying, especially if your spouse or children depend on your income.
- Evaluate the cost of long-term care in a nursing home or assisted living facility. Find out if your monthly income will meet Medicaid eligibility requirements and the cost of long-term care insurance.
- If you are disabled, widowed or have a spouse or child with permanent kidney failure you may be eligible for Medicare at age 50. Contact Medicare or your state insurance department for more information.

If you plan to retire before age 65, there are several choices to consider when securing affordable health insurance:

- If you are covered by an employer-sponsored group health insurance policy, inquire whether your employer sponsors a retiree group plan, or if you can convert the coverage to an individual policy.
- If you are in good health and can afford high out-of-pocket expenses (minimum of \$1,200 for an individual or \$2,400 for a family), you may consider a high-deductible plan.
- Depending on your age and future income, purchasing an annuity may make sense, as annuities typically pay an income that is guaranteed to last as long you live.

You can access the NAIC Get Ready Resources by clicking [here](#).

Air Ambulance Insurance

In the event that an emergency does happen, and you or a loved one require immediate medical attention, air ambulances can transport the patient quickly to a medical facility. Some health insurance policies cover this service, but some coverage gaps can leave patients with large medical bills.

It is estimated that more than 550,000 patients in the U.S. use air ambulances each year. The average air ambulance trip is 52 miles and costs between \$12,000 to \$25,000 per flight. Many insurers will pay what they deem reasonable use of an air ambulance. Depending on circumstances, the remainder of the bill could be the patient's

responsibility.

Medicare may pay for air ambulance services if the medical emergency requires immediate and rapid transportation. However, Medicare may only cover air ambulance services within the U.S. and to the nearest medical facility.

In the event of a medical emergency it is important to be protected from high medical costs. Consult your insurance agent and find out what air ambulance coverage your policy provides. Make sure you know what medical care, types of aircraft, how many miles, and how many passengers are covered in your policy.

If you need additional coverage, talk to your insurance company about purchasing additional air ambulance coverage.

Auto Theft Tips

New Year's Day is the time to spend with your family and friends and make resolutions for the New Year. According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, it is also the number one holiday for vehicle thefts.

Protect yourself against auto theft with these tips:

- Remove your keys from the ignition, and never leave your engine running when you are not in your vehicle.
- Lock your doors and close your windows.
- Park in a well-lit area.
- Install an audible alarm.
- Equip your vehicle with a tracking system.
- Keep your registration and insurance information with you and never leave personal information in your car.

The Office of Consumer Advocacy wishes you a safe holiday season.

Stay Connected with the LDI

Keep up with tips and news from the LDI, including newsletters, press releases and videos, by connecting with us through social media.



[Like](#)



[Follow](#)



[Subscribe](#)



[Connect](#)