What Is a Copay Accumulator?

A copay accumulator is a policy or provision in your health insurance plan that may increase how much you pay for your healthcare.

Your employer may include a copay accumulator as part of your healthcare insurance to reduce the amount they spend on high-cost prescription drugs. If a drug you take is impacted, your out-of-pocket costs for healthcare will rise.

How Do You Know if Your Employer Is Using a Copay Accumulator?

• Have you recently received a notice from your employer or from your health insurance company?

• Are you paying more for medical services or prescription drugs?

• Have you not reached your deductible yet (but you had at this time last year)?

• If you have answered yes to any of these questions, your employer may be using a copay accumulator.

Key Healthcare Terms

Deductible:
Costs for which you are responsible, before your insurance plan will start paying for healthcare expenses. Some plans do not cover the cost of drugs until the deductible has been met. For example, if your deductible is $2,000, you will pay the full cost of your prescriptions until you reach $2,000 in costs.

Coinsurance:
Your share of costs of a healthcare service, calculated as a percent (for example, 20%), after you have met your deductible.

Copay:
A pre-determined amount (for example, $20) that you pay for a healthcare service.

Out-of-Pocket Maximum:
The maximum amount your plan can require you to pay for all your healthcare services that year. Typically, your copays, coinsurance, and deductibles all apply to your maximum.
What Should You Do if You Think Your Employer Is Using a Copay Accumulator?

1. Talk to your human resources (HR) department.

Important: Your HR department can help you understand how copay accumulators might impact you.

2. Use this handout to help your employer understand the impacts of copay accumulators on your health and productivity.

3. Contact the free healthcare advocate that may be provided as part of your insurance to help you sort through information.

4. Call the copay assistance program that helps you pay your prescription drug cost-sharing to learn about any additional help available.

5. Contact your state’s Department of Insurance to learn about copay accumulators and your rights.