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National Survey Finds Consumers Unaware of the Opportunity to Save Thousands of Dollars by Being Savvy Health Care Shoppers

Plan for Your Health *Can Help Consumers Make Money-Saving Choices During Open Enrollment*

HARTFORD, Conn., October 21, 2008 — According to a survey of insured consumers released today by *Plan for Your Health*, the public education program from Aetna (NYSE: AET) and the Financial Planning Association (FPA), 45 percent of respondents were unaware that they can save money in the coming year by making smart decisions about their health benefits. In these tough economic times, millions of Americans are seeking new ways to reduce household spending, but not enough are taking simple steps like opening a Flexible Spending Account (FSA), using mail-order prescription drug services and tapping into discounts on services like gym memberships.

“For millions of Americans with tighter household budgets this year, fully understanding their options during Open Enrollment will help them make educated, potentially money-saving decisions,” said Laurie Brubaker, head of Integrated Health and Productivity Solutions for Aetna. “During this once a year opportunity to make changes to their health benefits plan, consumers should take the time to review health care spending, and weigh all the available options. By spending some time focusing on health benefits and related expenses, people can make important decisions that can result in savings this year and into the future.”

To help people identify opportunities to save money, *Plan for Your Health* developed the *Be Smart About Your Benefits* checklist, located at www.PlanforYourHealth.com, that details five things consumers should think about when evaluating their health benefits at Open Enrollment and throughout the year. By asking the following questions and carefully evaluating the answers, it is possible to make choices that could add up to thousands of dollars of savings:

- **Am I being FSA-savvy?** Take some time to identify your upcoming expenses and determine a realistic FSA contribution. Since money in an FSA is exempt from federal, most state, and payroll taxes, you’ll reduce your taxable income – and be able to use those pre-tax dollars for health care expenses. For example, a pre-tax \$2,000 FSA contribution not only gives you money to spend on qualified health care expenses, but would also result in a tax savings of more than

\$450 for an individual making \$25,000 per year. You also might look into other savings vehicles such as Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRAs) or Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) to see if they make sense for you and your family.

- **Does it pay to be healthy?** It could! Some plans completely or partially cover annual physicals and preventive screenings, as well as offer discounts on gym memberships. Some employers even offer “wellness incentives” that can total hundreds of dollars a year for employees who exercise regularly, eat healthfully or participate in stop smoking programs, among other things. See if you can take advantage of any of these offerings – it’s a great way to save money *and* stay healthy, and they may be available from your employer or health plan at no charge.
- **Can my benefits help me save time?** Yes! Some insurers offer coverage for online consultations, which are often more convenient than in-person visits for routine health needs. Talk to your doctor or your insurer to find out how to take advantage of online visits. By using them reasonably, you could save gas money and valuable time. Many health insurers also are offering personal health records online that help you track spending, understand what preventive care you might need, and even allow you to coordinate with your doctor’s office.
- **Can pharmacy mail-order help me?** It can if you take regular prescriptions and sign up for a health plan with discounts on mail-order services for routine prescriptions. With some plans, you could get a three-month supply of your drug but only pay for a two-month prescription. So, if your family spends \$50 per month on prescriptions, you could save about \$200 per year.
- **Should I go generic?** The average brand-name prescription drug costs about \$85 more than the average generic. If it’s possible, switch from a brand-name to a generic and save more than \$1,000 a year.

“Many people think that medical expenses are beyond their control,” said Tracey Baker, co-author of *Navigating Your Health Benefits For Dummies*, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional and former chair of FPA’s National Capital Area. “However, taking the time to make wise decisions – both at Open Enrollment and in daily life – can result in substantial savings.”

According to the recent *Plan for Your Health* survey of 1,575 insured adults:

- Only about a quarter (26 percent) of respondents indicated they are likely to make changes to their benefits during Open Enrollment.
- 87 percent of respondents are more worried about their finances this year because of the struggling economy, but the majority (59 percent) plan to spend less than one hour, or no time at all, reviewing their health benefits options during Open Enrollment.
- One third of respondents (33 percent) have ordered products like clothing and electronics online to save money, but only 19 percent have taken advantage of a mail-order pharmacy this year.

- Almost all respondents (93 percent) have taken at least one step to save money on general expenses over the past year, including eating out less often (68 percent), clipping coupons (63 percent) and traveling less frequently (56 percent).

Aetna launched the *Plan for Your Health* campaign in partnership with the Financial Planning Association in September 2004 to help all Americans make smart health benefits and financial planning decisions at every stage of life. The campaign website, www.PlanforYourHealth.com, offers tips, tools and information to help consumers choose, use and get the most value from their health benefits.

About the Survey

These results are based on a survey conducted by the Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) among a sample of 2,187 U.S. adults, comprising 1,046 men and 1,141 women 18 years of age and older. Among these, 1,575 reported having health insurance and therefore qualified to continue the survey.

The ORC online omnibus study is conducted twice a week among a demographically representative U.S. sample of adults 18 years of age and older using Greenfield Online sample. Interviewing for this survey was completed September 29 – October 3, 2008.

About Aetna

Aetna is one of the nation's leading diversified health care benefits companies, serving approximately 37.2 million people with information and resources to help them make better informed decisions about their health care. Aetna offers a broad range of traditional and consumer-directed health insurance products and related services, including medical, pharmacy, dental, behavioral health, group life and disability plans, and medical management capabilities and health care management services for Medicaid plans. Our customers include employer groups, individuals, college students, part-time and hourly workers, health plans, governmental units, government-sponsored plans, labor groups and expatriates. www.aetna.com

About *Plan for Your Health*

Plan for Your Health, a public education campaign from Aetna and the Financial Planning Association, gives consumers the information they need to make health benefits and financial choices that meet their needs now and in the future. The Web site focuses on five life events when women need to re-examine their health benefits – career, marriage, family, living single and retirement – and offers consumer-friendly tools, tips and content that support well-informed decision-making. www.PlanforYourHealth.com

About The Financial Planning Association® (FPA®)

FPA is the leadership and advocacy organization connecting those who provide, support and benefit from professional financial planning. FPA demonstrates and supports a professional commitment to education and a client-centered financial planning process. Based in Denver, Colo., FPA has over 100 chapters throughout the country representing more than 28,000 members involved in all facets of providing financial planning services. Working in alliance with academic leaders, legislative and regulatory bodies, financial services firms and consumer interest organizations, FPA is the community that fosters the value of financial planning and advances the financial planning profession. www.FPAnet.org

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