

# 2024 Benefits Change Highlights



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Iowa State University strives to be an employer of choice while continually aligning with the goals of our [strategic plan](#). One of the many ways the university works to meet this standard is by investing heavily in its employee benefits program, including medical insurance and dental insurance; basic term, supplemental and dependent life insurance; long-term disability; eyewear and other discounts; an employee assistance program; adoption assistance; and tuition reimbursement.

We know your and your family's health and wellbeing is particularly important to you. That's why the university provides this highly competitive array of benefits that reflect the variety of needs of our workforce.

### OPEN ENROLLMENT

## November 1 - 17, 2023!

Please review your coverage options and use our popular interactive guidance tool, ALEX, to ensure you enroll in the best coverage for you and your family for 2024. You must elect Health Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA) and/or Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP) contributions, or you won't have any contributions in 2024. All other benefits elections will carry over. The Open Enrollment period closes on Friday, November 17, 2023, at 5 p.m. CST. You will not be able to make changes after the 17th.

# Why a Yearly Benefits Review?

Iowa State is always seeking new and better ways to offer a highly competitive benefits package that gives you the opportunity to live a full, well life while balancing ever-increasing plan costs.

That's why the Employee Benefits Advisory Committee (EBAC), comprised of a representative group of your faculty and staff colleagues, thoroughly reviews our benefits coverage and plan costs each year. This is a common best practice in universities across the country.

Our benefits package gives you the opportunity to  
**live a full, well life.**

The committee takes a close look at the details to make sure the university continues to:

## Offer What You Need the Most

We make sure our plans and programs stay highly competitive, relevant, and valuable for our faculty and staff population. While we focus on the plans that most people use (like medical coverage), we also offer a full array of options to support the demands of your busy life—from your health and finances to your overall wellbeing.

## Keep Coverage Affordable and Provide Choice/Flexibility

We always look for ways to balance two of our benefit goals—offering you and your family affordable care and coverage while making that coverage financially sustainable for you and the university. As part of this process, EBAC, along with the university's senior leadership and its external benefits consultant, regularly review our vendor programs and services to make sure we're getting the best value for your investment and taking advantage of new and innovative approaches that improve benefits and lower costs.

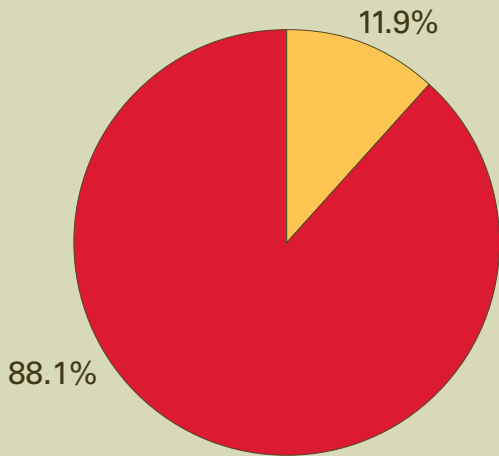
## Be an Employer of Choice

One of the many ways the university works to meet this standard is by investing heavily in its faculty and staff benefits program. In addition to our highly competitive medical insurance, Iowa State offers a full array of offerings.

# The Big Picture

We're proud of the significant investment the university makes in its employees and their families through our medical and Rx coverage as well as the other benefits we offer. To put the 2024 changes to Iowa State's Medical Plan in perspective, it's important to look at the university's current investments in these benefits and how they have risen.

## 2024 Estimated Total Medical/Rx Premium Cost Share



**IN 2024, IOWA STATE EXPECTS TO PAY**

**88.1%** of the share of the medical plan premiums.

**THAT'S ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS THAN THE**

**88.9%** that the university expects to contribute in 2023.

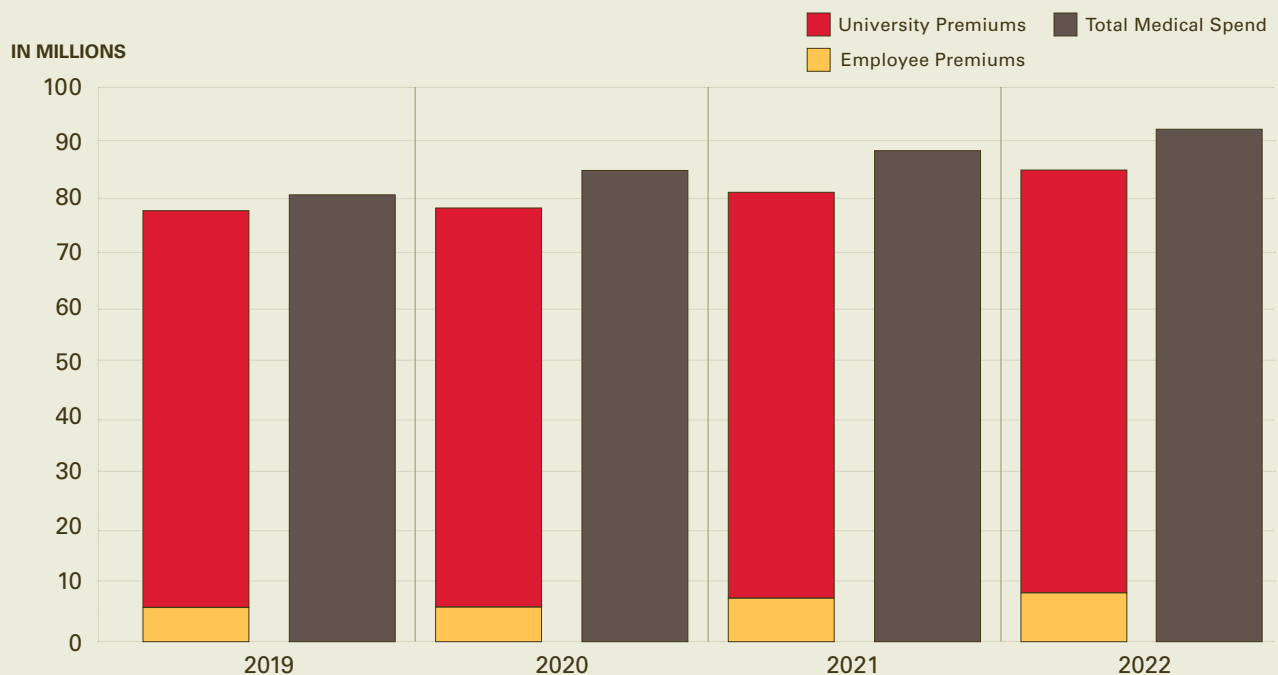
■ University Premiums   ■ Employee Premiums

## Paying for Medical/Rx Claims

Iowa State's medical plan is "self-insured." That means each year the university pays all the actual medical claims of its plan members and bears most of the risk for medical costs. We contract with Wellmark to administer the plan.

In recent years, our claims have been higher than the money we bring in through monthly premiums.

While total medical costs have continued to rise each year over the last 20+ years, the university has shielded faculty and staff from the full weight of the cost increases by gradually paying more and more of the total costs. The result? The gap between what the university and faculty and staff contribute has grown to a place where it's not sustainable.



# 2024 Benefits Changes

Results from the fall 2022 Benefits Survey showed overwhelming appreciation for Iowa State's benefits package.

**That's why for 2024, the university is keeping almost all your benefits the same as what you have now.** You'll see a modest increase in your dental premiums, and the Health Care FSA annual maximum contribution amount and rollover limits will increase according to annual federal limits.

To keep the medical plan financially stable, it is necessary to increase premiums and, in some cases, the share of the cost you pay when you receive care. We will not be making any changes to your pharmacy benefit plan design for plan year 2024.

## WHY THE CHANGES?

**Bottom line: health care costs keep going up and Iowa State needs to share more of the cost with faculty and staff.**

The university will continue to pay the vast majority of the expense, approximately 88% in 2024. However, after a rigorous review, our EBAC concluded these changes are necessary so the costs are more sustainable and the university can continue to offer a competitive benefits package.

While we'll continue to work to hold down costs, we may need to make additional adjustments each year to keep up with rising health care costs.

*Please know that we're doing all we can to manage rising costs and balance the needs of faculty and staff with the realities of the university's finances. The increases closely align with national averages, and the university remains committed to offering you highly competitive benefits coverage. While employee costs will be slightly higher, the university will continue to bear the majority of the cost and overall health care coverage will not change.*

— ED HOLLAND, UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESOURCES, DIRECTOR OF BENEFITS & WORKLIFE

## Medical Plan Premiums

### 2024 Monthly Medical Plan Premiums

Premiums, the monthly amount that comes out of your paychecks, are what you pay for medical and prescription drug coverage

Coverage Tier	Wellmark BlueHMO	Wellmark BluePPO
<b>Employee Only</b>	<b>\$33</b> (up by \$4)	<b>\$55</b> (up by \$6)
<b>Employee + Spouse/ Partner</b>	<b>\$184</b> (up by \$32)	<b>\$332</b> (up by \$34)
<b>Employee + Child(ren)</b>	<b>\$120</b> (up by \$20)	<b>\$246</b> (up by \$25)
<b>Family</b>	<b>\$234</b> (up by \$41)	<b>\$425</b> (up by \$43)
<b>Family Double Spouse/ Partner (contract holder pays)</b>	<b>\$154</b> (up by \$25)	<b>\$302</b> (up by \$32)

## Perspective

As with most organizations, you will see increases in your premiums for 2024.

Even with these changes, Iowa State's employee premiums remain highly competitive compared to other colleges and universities.<sup>1</sup>

- For HMO plans, the median employee premium is \$128/month for single coverage and \$449/month for family coverage.
- For PPO plans, the median employee premium is \$155/month for single coverage and \$597/month for family coverage.

<sup>1</sup> College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUA-PA-HR) 2023 Benefits In Higher Education Survey

## Medical Plan Cost Sharing

You'll continue to have the same medical plan options—Wellmark HMO or PPO—and they will work in the same way as they do now. However, you will share in more of the costs through these moderate changes. The share of costs borne by Iowa State are still considerably above market norms.

Wellmark BlueHMO Coverage (all coverage is in-network)— Plan Features for 2024				
Plan Feature	Coverage Tier	Your Cost		Perspective
		2023	2024	
<b>Preventive Care</b> <i>(annual screenings and shots)</i>	All	\$15	Free	<b>You will pay nothing for preventive care.</b>
<b>Annual Medical Deductible</b> <i>(expenses you pay before the plan starts paying)</i>	Employee-Only	\$0	\$250	Before the plan starts paying 90% of the costs, you'll pay the first \$250 or \$500 of your expenses to satisfy a deductible. Note: All services with copays are not subject to the deductible. These changes bring the deductibles closer to the 2023 CUPA-HR university median for HMOs which are \$500 and \$1,050.
	All others	\$0	\$500	
<b>Copay</b> <i>(flat dollar)</i>	All	\$15	\$15	When a copay is listed, you will pay one copay per visit which will be inclusive of that visit.
<b>Coinsurance</b> <i>(percentage of cost) for most medical services—including hospitalization</i>	All	0%	10%	Instead of 100%, the university will pay 90% of the cost of most medical services.
<b>Annual Medical Out-of-Pocket Maximum (OPM)</b> <i>(most you pay in a calendar year)</i>	Employee Only	\$0	\$1,500	This maximum is designed to protect you from catastrophic medical costs.
	All others	\$0	\$3,000	
<b>All Other Coverage Including Pharmacy</b>	All	No changes for 2024		<p>All other coverage levels will stay the same—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rx coverage—including \$0 copay for all mail order generic prescriptions</li> <li>Office visits (PCP, specialist, urgent care, telemedicine)—still \$15</li> <li>ER—visits still \$125</li> </ul>

During Open Enrollment, you'll have access to a full plan comparison so you can see all the coverage levels plus our [ALEX](#) guidance tool. These charts only show what is changing for 2024.

The pharmacy OPM is staying the same: \$2,000 employee-only, \$4,000 all others.



Wellmark BluePPO Coverage—Plan Features for 2024				
Plan Feature	Coverage Tier	Your Cost		Perspective
		2023 In / Out <sup>2</sup>	2024 In / Out <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Preventive Care</b> ( <i>annual screenings and shots</i> )	All	<b>\$25</b> / 20%	<b>Free</b> / 40%	<b>In-network preventive care will be no cost to you.</b>
<b>Annual Medical Deductible</b> ( <i>expenses you pay before the plan starts paying</i> )	Employee-Only	<b>\$0</b> / \$400	<b>\$400</b> / \$800	Before the plan starts paying, you'll satisfy a deductible. Note: All services with copays are not subject to the deductible. These changes bring the deductibles closer to the 2023 CUPA-HR university median for PPOs which are \$750 and \$1,800.
	All except Employee-Only	<b>\$0</b> / \$800	<b>\$800</b> / \$1,600	
<b>Copay in-network</b> ( <i>flat dollar</i> )	All	<b>\$25</b> / 20%	<b>\$25</b> (no change) / 40%	When a copay is listed, the employee will pay one copay per visit which will be inclusive of that visit.
<b>Coinsurance</b> for all other medical services—including hospitalization	All	<b>10%</b> / 20%	<b>20%</b> / 40%	Instead of 90%, the university will pay 80% of the cost of most in-network medical services.
<b>Annual Medical Out-of-Pocket Maximum (OPM)</b> ( <i>most you pay in a calendar year</i> )	Employee-Only	<b>\$2,000</b> / \$4,000	No change	This maximum is designed to protect you from catastrophic medical costs.
	All others	<b>\$4,000</b> / \$8,000	No change	
<b>All Other Coverage Including Pharmacy</b>	All	No Changes for 2024		All other coverage levels will stay the same—for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rx coverage</li> <li>• Annual Medical OPM (See above)</li> <li>• ER—visits still \$125</li> </ul>

The in-network amounts are in bold. More than 97% of medical expenses that Iowa State faculty and staff and their families incur are with in-network providers and facilities.

To see how your plans work with the changes and example scenarios, go to the Summary Benefit Comparison (SBC) section on the [medical plan page](#) of the UHR Benefits site.

During Open Enrollment, you'll have access to a full plan comparison so you can see all the coverage levels plus our [ALEX](#) guidance tool. These charts only show what is changing for 2024.

The pharmacy OPM is staying the same: \$2,000 employee-only, \$4,000 all others.

<sup>2</sup> First number is the amount when you use providers and facilities in the PPO network. Second number is the amount when you use providers and facilities outside the PPO network.

# 10 Ways to Get the Best Value

Iowa State is continually doing its part to manage medical costs—from negotiating our medical plan and pharmacy contracts to making sure all dependents on our plans are eligible.

Your day-to-day decisions also make a big difference in how much you pay for health care. Here are several things you can do to make sure you're getting the best value from your medical coverage:

- 1 Do what you can to stay healthy.** Get regular preventive care (which will be free starting in 2024), eat healthy, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep.
- 2 Choose the right level of health care that you need at the moment.** For example, only go to the ER when you have a true emergency or if it's the only option in your area. You can call the BeWell phone number on the back of your Wellmark ID card 24/7 to talk with a nurse or get help finding the right in-network provider for your situation.
- 3 Reach out for help.** Benefits can be confusing, and you don't have to figure them out on your own. Before you enroll, use our interactive guidance tool, [ALEX](#), to help you choose the best coverage for you for 2024. Wellmark, Delta Dental, and Express Scripts member portals as well as customer service lines can also be of assistance.
- 4 Get your prescriptions through the mail.** It's the most convenient and cost-effective way to get your medications. Plus, you'll receive reminders so you don't forget to refill!
- 5 Put money in the Health Care FSA and/or DCAP to pay for certain expenses with pre-tax dollars.** And if you do, make sure to meet the deadlines for getting reimbursed for eligible expenses. Use ALEX to assist you in understanding this benefit and how much you may want to contribute.
- 6 Use providers in the Wellmark network—called in-network providers.** Use IZU for the BluePPO and XQW for the BlueHMO as the prefix when looking at [www.wellmark.com/finder](http://www.wellmark.com/finder). Otherwise, you'll pay more if you're in the PPO and pay the full cost if you're in the HMO.
- 7 Consider all the medical plan options that are available to your dependents.** In some situations, it may be more advantageous for them to be covered by their own employer's medical plan, for example.
- 8 Estimate your 2024 out-of-pocket medical costs to inform the plan option you select for 2024 and plan for your estimated expenses.** Utilizing [myWellmark](#) at [Wellmark.com](http://Wellmark.com) is an easy way to determine what you spent on medical costs in the past year and can help you determine a dollar amount you may want to put into your Health Care FSA as well as to estimate potential costs for 2024.
- 9 Estimate your 2024 out-of-pocket pharmacy costs and plan for your estimated expenses.** Utilizing [Express Scripts](#) is an easy way to determine what you spent on pharmacy costs in the past year and can help you determine a dollar amount you may want to put into your Health Care FSA as well as to estimate potential costs for 2024.
- 10 Estimate how much care will cost.** Find out approximately how much care will cost and keep tabs on spending utilization on your Wellmark, Delta Dental, and Express Scripts member portals at [myWellmark](#), [deltadental.com](http://deltadental.com), and [Express Scripts](#).

## Open Enrollment: November 1-17, 2023

Your ONE opportunity to enroll in or make changes to your benefits for 2024

# Take Action!

On average, your benefits package from Iowa State adds significantly to your total compensation. That’s why it’s important to make the best benefits choices for you and your family during the fall’s Open Enrollment period.

**Your Total Compensation**  
Check out your total compensation statement on the Workday Pay and Benefits application!

2023	October	<h3>3 Steps</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>1 Get Informed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scan the summary of <a href="#">2024 updates</a> and <a href="#">benefits education resources</a> on the HR website.</li> <li>Read the Inside Iowa State enrollment article.</li> </ul> </li> <li> <b>2 Get Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use our popular interactive guidance tool, <a href="#">ALEX</a>.</li> <li>Schedule a 1:1 virtual or in-person appointment with a Benefits Office staff member between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. CST Monday through Friday. To schedule your appointment, call 515-294-4800 or email <a href="mailto:benefits@iastate.edu">benefits@iastate.edu</a>.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<h3>Key Dates</h3>	
	November	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>3 Get Enrolled</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>View the recorded Open Enrollment video.</li> <li>Follow the Open Enrollment job aid instructions.</li> <li>Enroll during the enrollment period through Benefits Open Enrollment on Workday.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		<b>11/1 – 11/17</b> Open Enrollment period, your annual opportunity to enroll in benefits for the next calendar year
	December			At the end of the year, your new ID cards arrive
2024	January		<b>1/1</b> Your benefits choices take effect	