



# The Cason Group, Inc.

AN EMPLOYEE BENEFIT BROKERAGE HOUSE

SOUTH CAROLINA: 803.252.3033 • 800.951.3033 • 803.771.7045 fax • 888.252.2823 fax

NORTH CAROLINA: 888.794.7644 • 888.252.2823 fax

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[www.thecasongroup.com](http://www.thecasongroup.com)

## The Cason Group Introduces Securian Dental

The Cason Group is proud to announce the addition of Securian Dental to our family of ancillary products. Securian Dental is a partner with DeCare Dental Health International and Securian Life Insurance Company. Securian Life Insurance Company is rated “A” (Excellent) by A.M. Best and is one of the Minnesota Mutual Companies. DeCare International oversees dental benefits for 3.9 million individuals and 13,775 employer groups.

The Securian plans are “Easy to understand, Easy to use, and Easy to afford”. Included are 3 voluntary and 4 employer paid designs. These plans can be easily customized to meet plan design and/or budget targets. Features of these plans include:

- Medical lock discount—enrollment in the dental plan must be tied to medical coverage, meaning employees may not enroll in the dental plan unless they are enrolled in the medical plan as well
- Annual open enrollment for groups of 10-249 employees
- 8% premium reduction for prior comparable coverage

*Contact your Marketing Representative for further information on these plans.*

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# FEBRUARY 2005

# CARRIER UPDATES:

## BCBS of SC

### *BCBS of SC Makes Changes to High Deductible Plans*

High Deductible Health Plans including Personal BluePlan and Preferred Blue now cover routine physical exams, including well-child exams, at \$300 per benefit year with no visit limitations. Please note that groups changing from the discontinued \$2250/\$4500 MSA Plan to the new High Deductible Health Plan at their renewal date will also receive this enhanced benefit.

## Starmark

### *Starmark Allows Dual Networks*

Effective 2/1/05, Starmark will offer two networks per business location up to a maximum of five network/location combinations for each employer group. A dual network is defined as offering a selection between two PPO networks to a single employee at the time of enrollment. Both networks must be available in the business location. Both networks must allow the plan design, either for in-force or new business groups. This will apply in instances where the employer would like to offer prospective enrollees the choice between PPO networks.

Rates will vary by network within the same location. Please ensure each employee application clearly indicates the network selection prior to submitting a new group case.

### *2004 Customer Service Stats*

*Average speed of answer: 59 seconds*

*Percentage of calls that hung up before a person answered: 2.4%*

*Average talk time: 3 Minutes and 20 seconds*

*Calls Answered: 344,271*

## AIG

### *2004 Call Center Stats*

*Average speed of answer: 26 seconds*

*Percentage of calls that hung up before a person answered: 1.70%*

*Average talk time: 2 Minutes and 30 Seconds*

*Calls Answered: 131,512*

*First call resolution: 93%*

## Carolina Care Plan

- Please make sure you have the most current Carolina Care Plan Health Information Forms. These forms must have a height/weight slot on them. Forms without the height/weight slot will not be accepted.
- Carolina Care Plan orders medical ID cards once a week from their vendor. Depending on the date a new group is approved or an in-force group changes plans it will be 10-14 days before ID cards are received.

## Companion Life

- As of 1/1/05, all of Companion Life's dental products -small group, true group and voluntary are paying in the 90th percentile. For Companion Life quotes outside of South Carolina contact The Cason Group.

### *2005 Sales Contest*

All business 1-1-05 through 12-31-05 will count towards Companion Life's trip to:

MAUI, HAWAII

April 3-8, 2006

Qualifying agents will spend six days at the oceanfront Ritz-Carlton Kapalua. The first level of qualification is \$75,000.

Companion Life is not available in South Carolina.

## Shenandoah

### *Shenandoah -2005 Sales Contest*

All business 1-1-05 through 12-31-05 will count towards Shenandoah Life's trip to:

FLORENCE, ITALY—THE TUSCAN JEWEL

May 15-21, 2006.

Guests will be staying at The Grand Hotel. This five star hotel is a landmark of history and tradition, overlooking the Arno River. Brokers/Agents will qualify with \$150,000 of annualized premium with a minimum of four (4) groups sold.

### *2004 Call Center Stats*

*Average speed of answer: 26 seconds*

*Percentage of calls that hung up before a person answered: 2.38%*

*Average talk time: 2 Minutes and 24 seconds*

*Calls Answered: 126,699*

# *Carolina Direct Introduces Two New Deductibles for Adults*

*Great news! Carolina Care Plan has added two new deductible options to its individual plan, Carolina Direct:*

⇒ \$750

⇒ \$1500

The two new plans have lower out-of-pocket costs than the two original plans. The \$750 deductible has a \$2000 out-of-pocket cost (\$8,000 for out of network); while the \$1500 deductible has a \$3000 out-of-pocket cost (\$8,000 for out of network). The new applications and first quarter rates (Jan.1-March 31) are available on our website ([www.thecasongroup.com](http://www.thecasongroup.com)). Please call The Cason Group if you would like to get appointed to sell these products.

## *New Carolina Direct Rx Discount Card*

A prescription drug discount card is now included for all existing and new Carolina Direct adult and kid plans that do not include prescription drug coverage. There is no charge for this drug discount card. These members will be able to receive discounts averaging 25% on retail prescription drugs when they show the pharmacy discount card at participating pharmacy locations.

## *West Coast Life Introduces New Term Rates*

At the end of 2004, West Coast Life made a few changes to their Term portfolio. We are pleased to announce they continue to be an industry leader with very competitive rates. The changes include the following:

- Rates have slightly increased, although not in every cell. (A cell is defined as issue age, band, and risk classification)
- The policy fee for all Golden G & V products is \$50. (Previously, the 20 year product was \$40)
- Minimum issue age is 15 for Standard Non-Tobacco and 18 for all other classes.
- Substandard premiums are 25% per table rating.
- A few minor changes have been made to the underwriting guidelines to include a 5 pound reduction across the board for Preferred and Super Preferred build charts.

An internet update is available for the rating software, which can be downloaded from West Coast Life's website. Also, current rates may be calculated online at [www.winflexweb.com](http://www.winflexweb.com).

## *Let Us Order Your Next Paramed Exam*

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our service to you, our agents. That's why we now offer to order your West Coast Life paramed exams for you. Simply complete the Paramed Instructions Sheet, return it with a completed application and we'll take care of the rest. We offer three companies to choose from: ExamOne, Portamedic and EMSI. We know your time is valuable and we hope you take advantage of this great service! For more information or a copy of this form, contact Shields Catone at [shields@thecasongroup.com](mailto:shields@thecasongroup.com)

## *Carrier Billing Contacts*

The Cason Group is always glad to assist you with your groups billing questions or problems. However, for those times that you would prefer to contact the carrier directly we have listed the appropriate phone numbers below.

AMERICAN GENERAL .....	800-346-7692
BCBS of SC .....	803-264-1010 800-868-2500
CAROLINA CARE PLAN.....	803-750-7400 800-747-9995
CIGNA .....	800-753-5190
COMPANION HEALTHCARE .....	803-382-5975 866-858-3272
COMPANION LIFE .....	800-753-0404
GE .....	877-392-4642
SHENANDOAH .....	800-848-5433 *2002
STARMARK.....	800-522-1246
USNOW .....	800-694-9888

# Benefits of Employer versus Employee HSA Contributions

Both employers and employees might be intimidated by the various choices facing them when setting up a Health Savings Account. In reality, there are only three options: employee pre-tax, employee after-tax, and employer.

Employees are able to make contributions to an HSA either on a pre-tax or after-tax basis.

**Pre-tax Contributions:** In order for contributions to be made on a pre-tax basis for employees, the contributions must be made through a Section 125 plan. Contributions to an employee's HSA through a Section 125 plan are treated as employer contributions, and the employee cannot deduct employer contributions on his or her federal income tax return as HSA contributions. To set-up pre-tax contributions, contact your third-party administrator to modify your plan design.

**After-tax contributions:** After-tax contributions are deductible by the employee in determining adjusted gross income (i.e., "above-the-line"). The contributions are deductible whether or not the employee itemizes deductions.

In either instance, a HSA is owned by the employee, and is completely portable from employer to employer. Funds in HSAs also roll over from year to year and, after age 65, can be used for any purpose, penalty-free.

**Employer contributions:** An employer has the option of fully funding employee HSAs, partially funding employee HSAs, or simply covering costs associated with opening a HSA.

**Classified as employer-provided coverage:** Contributions made by employers to their employees' HSAs are treated as employer-provided coverage for medical expenses under an accident or health plan, are excludable from gross income, are not subject to withholding for income tax, and are not subject to other employment taxes.

**Employees take responsibility:** Unlike other healthcare financing options, employers are not responsible or liable for the employee's account once it is opened; there is not a claims administration or adjudication process and employers do not have

the hassle of maintaining records for the IRS.

**NEW employer contribution options:** Under HSA legislative guidance, when employers are making contributions, they must make comparable contributions to all eligible employees. Contributions are considered comparable if either the same dollar or same percentage of the deductible is contributed. However, if employer contributions are made through a Section 125 Plan, the comparability rule does not apply and employers would be able to make matching contributions. For details, see Notice 2004-50, Q&A 47. *Source: HSA Bank*

## The Cason Group 2005 Road Show was a success!



Over 100 agents took advantage of the opportunity to meet with representatives from eight of our carriers. We hope you were able to join us this year and are already looking forward to the 2006 Road Show.

*Odds and Ends from Louie Cason, Jr.,  
CLU, RHU, President of The Cason Group*

Recently, Trustmark, parent of Starmark, was downgraded by A. M. Best from A- to B++. A discussion with Starmark's CEO shows that they are eager to be back at A- as soon as possible. They are having ongoing discussion with Best on how they can change the uncertainty that caused the downgrade. The issue revolves around a reinsurance treaty for Workmens Compensation Trustmark got into in the 90's. Unfortunately, the program went sour and is now running potential liabilities in the 10's of millions. While Trustmark feels they have made provision for this, Best is still taking the action. The service levels with Starmark will not change, nor will their underwriting. Hopefully, the downgrade will turn around within the next year, as Trustmark is taking some actions that will help Best to feel more positive. Please stay tuned on this one.

In addition, CIGNA in NC and SC has received an A- rating from Best. While they were rated B++ in those states until recently, that was only for the local HMO plans which file separately. The national CIGNA company is rated A- by Best and put their financial resources behind each individual plan. It is encouraging to note that almost all of CIGNA's state HMO plans are rated by Best as A-. CIGNA is also looking at changing their commission schedule to a percentage of premiums. More on that when we have it. <http://www.state.sc.us/forest/refserv.htm>

HSA's are receiving increased attention in the press, in financial magazines, and most importantly in your clients offices. Recently, articles have been appearing in the Wall Street Journal(see "HSA's are A-OK" Jan 24, pg A19.) and the local papers. Our office has come up with a CE presentation on HSA's and have held several teleconferences on the subject. One of the carriers we work with said that 50% of their January 1 small group business asked for a HSA compatible Qualified High Deductible Plan. We are here to help with the understanding of this mechanics as well as the presentation and enrollment if you need it. Please call on us.

Finally, we have had 27 brokers qualify for our trip to The Homestead. This is the first year we have had a trip sponsored solely by The Cason Group. I believe the brokers going will truly enjoy the facility. We hope you will be at the one for next year. Again, details will follow.

We appreciate all you did to make 2004 another record year for us. But most of all, we appreciate the trust you put in us when you allow us to handle one of your clients. I pray we will always be found by you to be responsive to your need.

*The Cason Group  
Becomes More Efficient*

As part of The Cason Group goal of becoming more efficient we have recently begun using DocStar, a paperless (electronic) system. Any document that we would like to have paperless; we scan into the DocStar system and it can be retrieved by any computer in our office. Just a few clicks of the mouse and the entire file can be retrieved! This is a much more efficient way of keeping up with files (they do not get lost) and more than one person can be looking at it at the same time. Also, when a broker calls with a question about a quote they received, we can automatically have it at our fingertips to help with any questions. We have already scanned many types of our files into this system; our goal is to have all files scanned into the system by the end of 2005.

**Food for Thought**

"...there are always a certain group of leaders who believe themselves to be the center of the universe. ...In a day in which we see much disintegration of families...leaders must renew their commitment to their own families."

—*Spurgeon on Leadership*  
by Larry Michael

"Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain."

—Proverbs 31:10-11

"Raise up a child in the way he is bent and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

—Proverbs 22:6

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

—Isaiah 41:10

EASY TO SELL.  
EASY TO WORK WITH.  
+ EASY TO TRUST.  

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SECURIAN DENTAL.

## One brilliant solution.

Securian Dental- Group plans for two or more employees.

Securian Dental is designed around the brilliant idea that simple is better.

### Easy to sell

Now you can offer your clients competitively priced employer-paid and voluntary group dental plans. All include immediate 100% coverage of preventive care, plus strong options for basic and major coverage. Members may see any dentist in America. Worldwide emergency coverage is automatically included.

### Easy to work with

We pride ourselves on superior customer service with easy enrollment, quick claims payment, and our dedicated broker phone line to promptly answer all your questions.

### Easy to trust

To create Securian Dental we've combined the strengths of Securian Life and DeCare Dental

Health International, LLC (DDHI). Securian Life is authorized to conduct business in 44 states and the District of Columbia, and is recognized by A.M. Best with an A (Excellent- third highest of 16 categories) rating. Securian Life is part of the Minnesota Mutual Companies. DDHI is an affiliate of DeCare International, a global leader in oral health care management serving 3.2 million individuals in 13,000 companies nationwide. All this adds up to invaluable experience and financial strength you can trust.

### Easy to get started

For solutions to your clients' dental benefit problems, please contact:

#### THE CASON GROUP, INC.

Louie L. Cason, Jr., CLU, RHU  
1529 Washington Street, PO Box 11229  
Columbia, SC 29211

Toll Free: (800) 951-3033 Fax: (888) 252-2823  
[www.thecasongroup.com](http://www.thecasongroup.com)

Securian Dental is underwritten by Securian Life and administered by DeCare Dental Health International, LLC

Securian Dental Plans • DeCare Dental Health International, LLC  
3560 Delta Dental Drive • Eagan, MN 55122-3166  
toll-free 866-201-1818 • fax 651-994-5020 • [www.securiandental.com](http://www.securiandental.com)

Securian Dental is offered under policy form series 03-30612 or a state variation thereof.

## Staff News

### Tara Platts



Tara Platts joined The Cason Group in January. She is a University of South Carolina graduate with a BS in Public Relations. Tara, a Denmark, SC, native brings previous experience in the insurance industry.

*Welcome Tara!*

### Eric Griffin

Eric Griffin, Senior Marketing Representative, recently earned his RHU designation. Eric has been with The Cason Group since 1998 and represents agents in the upstate of SC and parts of Charlotte, NC.

*Congratulations Eric!*

## We Offer Assistance on Renewals

The Cason Group not only assists our brokers with placing new business but we also assist you on renewals. We normally receive notice of renewals prior to the agent and then notify agents of sizeable increases. The Cason Group will assist you in obtaining alternate plan quotes or quotes with different carriers. When there is a justifiable reason, we will contact the carrier and negotiate for what we feel is a more appropriate rate increase. Of course, we also are available to help with any questions or concerns.



**T H E  
CASON  
GROUP,  
I N C.**

An Employee Benefit Brokerage House

## Recently received notes from brokers:

*I wanted to take a minute and give Jesse and Mary Glenn some praise. I have had the pleasure of working with the Cason Group for a couple of years and have always had a good experience, but Jesse and Mary Glenn always seem to go above and beyond the call to help me. I feel very confident in both. They have enabled me to sell cases that seemed impossible. Sometimes we don't always stop and say thank you, but they deserve my thank you. Please feel free to share this in any way. Have a great day.*

*Last week I was reviewing several proposals for health, dental and short term disability with a client in Myrtle Beach. Rather than haul app packages for every carrier I might present, I just discussed the proposals until the client made a decision. Then I called The Cason Group to get materials faxed over to me. We probably had six or seven faxes going back and forth that day. Erin, Michelle and Emily were extremely helpful, as they always are. But they also made me look good! The owner of one of the two groups observed all my phone calls and faxes, and asked me, "How many people do you have working for you back in Columbia?" I just grinned and said, "Hmmm... a whole building full!" I'm glad to be using The Cason Group. Thanks.*



An Employee Benefit Brokerage House

1529 Washington St.  
PO Box 11229  
Columbia, SC 29211

PRESORT  
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COLUMBIA, SC

## Licensing Tip

Remember, when you change your residence you must change your address on record with the Department of Insurance. Most states have penalties if this is not done (up to \$2500 in South Carolina). The good news is that this is an easy process and often can be done online.

## FYI...

Physicians Care Network and Health Care Savings have announced their merger effective March 1, 2005. The new network will retain the name Health Care Savings and will have over 50,000 physician locations and 300 hospitals.

### Our Carriers:

- AIG/American General
- Allied
- American Republic
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of SC (SC)
- Carolina Care Plan (SC)
- CIGNA
- Companion HealthCare (SC)
- Companion Life
- Greater Georgia Life
- Securian
- Shenandoah Life
- Starmark
- Trustmark
- Unicare
- USNow
- West Coast Life

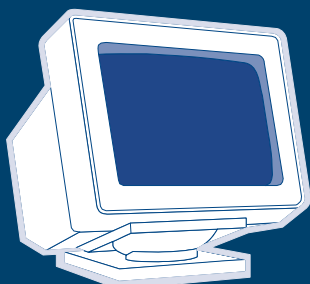
## Tech Tip

Did you know?

# #10

Microsoft Word has a handy feature called "AutoCorrect" that can be very helpful for those of us who could be better typists. However, if you were to type in certain words, for example "HSA", by default Word will change your spelling to "HAS", thinking that it's doing you a favor. If you would like to change the settings for Word's AutoCorrect feature, here's how.

1. Go to the Tools Menu and select AutoCorrect Options...



2. A dialogue box will appear. About the bottom half of this box controls the option "Replace text as you type."

3. To remove a word from the AutoCorrect list, (HSA for example) simply scroll down the list, select it, and then click Delete.

### Our Individual Products:

- Health
- Life
- Medicare Supplements

### Our Group Products:

- Health
- Dental
- Life
- LTD
- STD
- Vision

*Information for agents only.  
All information not applicable in all states.*