

# IHRY NEWS

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## Critical Illness Insurance Can Help Cover Financial Gaps

Article provided by [Zurich](#).

The paid benefit can be used for any needs, not just high deductibles. That's one reason many employee benefits plans are adding group critical illness insurance.

A key use for Critical Illness Insurance is to cover a high deductible or co-pays on primary medical insurance following a diagnosis such as cancer, heart attack, organ failure, pediatric cerebral palsy, advanced Alzheimer's disease or other potentially life-threatening health conditions outlined in the policy.

Covering out-of-pocket medical expenses is not the only benefit of Critical Illness Insurance. But it's undeniably a big one that's gaining attention. Trends in high-deductible health plans help explain why.

- High-deductible plans covered more than four of 10 Americans as of 2018, according to the U.S. Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention, a year in which such plans were defined as having a minimum \$1,300 deductible for an individual and \$2,600 for families. But deductibles can far exceed that amount.

- Among the estimated 156 million Americans with health insurance through employers in 2019, one in five had deductibles of more than \$3,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for families, according to a survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation.
- Yet, half of people with high-deductible plans and Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) have less than \$1,000 in their accounts, the Kaiser survey found.

Medical gaps like these are fueling employers' interest in Group Critical Illness Insurance as a voluntary benefits option for their employees. Critical illness insurance

sales increased 21 percent in 2017 after increasing 13 percent in 2016, according to BenefitsPro. For many workers, having supplemental insurance to help with out-of-pocket expenses could be the difference between being able to focus on treatment and recovery for the affected family member, or losing sleep over mounting debt.

## The bankruptcy link

Even with comprehensive medical insurance and lower deductibles, the expenses surrounding a critical illness can quickly exceed insurance coverage and savings. Two-thirds of people who file for bankruptcy cite medical issues as a key contributor to their financial depletion, according to a study of filings between 2013 and 2016.

A striking example of the heavy financial toll of a critical illness is that of Nobel Prize winner Leon Lederman. He won the Nobel medal in 1988 for his work in physics. In the years that followed, he was diagnosed with dementia. In 2015, his medal was sold at auction for \$765,000 to help cover medical bills related to his care.

## An alternative to crowdfunding

A critical illness can bring many kinds of overlooked expenses, such as lost wages during treatment, additional child care costs, travel and lodging expenses for supporting family members, and of course household bills that don't pause for a personal health crisis. As an indication of how those costs can spiral, on the popular crowdfunding site GoFundMe, roughly 250,000 campaigns to help cover healthcare costs are set up annually.

Critical illness insurance can provide more predictable support with similar flexibility. Many people are pleasantly surprised to learn that Critical Illness Insurance can be used to cover any expenses or purchases for a covered individual, whether a child or adult. The indemnity is a lump sum paid directly to the individual, who can use it for anything, from utility bills to a family trip to celebrate an improving prognosis.

Zurich's Accident and Health team works with employee benefits brokers, employers and other distributors to simplify and customize group accident insurance solutions and other employee benefits options that help people manage the unexpected. We want to help people emerge with resilience after accident and health challenges.

If you'd like to learn more about Zurich Critical Illness Insurance, [click here](#).



## Ihry Insights

*Article provided by Curtis Kaufman, Agency Manager  
Ihry Insurance*



## Cover Crops on Prevented Plant Acres

### USDA Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** What are cover crops?

**A:** A crop generally recognized by agricultural experts as agronomically sound for the area for erosion control, or other purposes related to conservation or soil improvement. Cover crops include grasses, legumes and forbs for seasonal cover and other conservation purposes. The cover crop must be managed and terminated according to Good Farming Practices.

Cover crops must achieve conservation purposes while minimizing the risks of reducing yields to the following crop due to soil water use. Conservation purpose includes reducing soil erosion, improving soil's physical and biological properties, supplying of nutrients and suppressing weeds. Information on cover crops can be gleaned from a number of sources including universities research and extension, crop advisors, and USDA Agencies. You may find general information on the [NRCS Cover Crop webpage](#).

**Q: Am I required to plant a cover crop based on a NRCS or Soil and Water Conservation District seeding recommendation, to meet RMA's cover crop requirements?**

*A: RMA requires insured producers to follow basic recommendations issued by recognized ag experts as defined in the Common Crop Insurance Policy Basic Provisions (18-BR) or USDA agency recommendations regarding selection of cover crops and seeding rates. Planting the cover crop based on NRCS recommendation is part of the requirements, but not the sole source of information available to producers. Cover Crop Termination Guidelines also contain general guidance for NRCS, FSA, and RMA. For more information regarding the Guidelines and cover crops and crop insurance please see the [RMA Cover Crop webpage](#).*

**Q: Does RMA or other USDA agencies have a list of approved cover crops?**

*A: RMA, NRCS and FSA do not have a list of approved cover crops. Producers should consult agricultural experts for which cover crops are agronomically sound for the area for erosion control or other purposes related to conservation or soil improvement. As defined in the Common Crop Insurance Policy Basic Provisions, agricultural experts are persons who are employed by the Cooperative Extension System or the agricultural departments of universities, or other persons approved by FCIC, whose research or occupation is related to the specific crop or practice for which such expertise is sought.*

*However, to remain eligible for prevented plant payments, producers must follow NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines. For more information regarding the Guidelines and cover crops and crop insurance please see the [RMA Cover Crop page](#).*

**Q: Will my insurable crop for the next crop year be impacted by my current cover crop decision?**

*A: To remain eligible for prevented plant payments, producers must follow NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines. For more information regarding the Guidelines and cover crops and crop insurance please see the [RMA Cover Crop webpage](#).*

## **Earlier Haying and Grazing of Cover Crops**

Farmers who planted cover crops on prevented plant acres can cut those fields for silage, haylage, or baleage earlier in 2019. **USDA's Risk Management Agency adjusted the final haying and grazing date from November 1 to September 1** to help farmers who were prevented from planting or delayed in planting because of flooding and excess rainfall this spring.

Producers should consult agricultural experts for the best cover crop options as USDA does not have an approved list of cover crops. To be eligible for prevented plant payments, producers:

- **Do** need to follow cover crop termination guidelines, which are available on [RMA's Cover Crop webpage](#).
- **Do not** need NRCS to review or approve cover crop selections for producers to be eligible for prevented plant payments. **(NEW)**



# 9 Home Security Tips

Article provided by *Travelers*.

Did you know that a burglary happens every 20.9 seconds in the U.S., according to the FBI?

Your home is one of your most valuable possessions, along with everything inside it. It's a place you want to feel safe and secure from the potential dangers of the outside world. Employing and engaging in some basic



best practices around home security is the first step to help create a secure environment for your loved ones.

**Consider these tips to help keep you and your family, and your possessions, safe and secure.**

1. Landscape with safety in mind. As you walk around your property, look for areas that could be potential hiding spots for thieves, who prize the privacy they provide. Try and clear away any overgrown areas.
2. Talk with your local police department. It can offer insight on past break-in trends in your area.
3. Get to know your neighbors. Take the time to meet and engage with people on your street and encourage them to watch out for any suspicious activity when you're not home.
4. Lighting matters. Lighting can set the right ambiance inside your home, but outdoor lighting can be the difference between your home being targeted – or not – by thieves. Motion-sensitive fixtures can help add security and provide light when needed. Also consider using automatic timers or smart lightbulbs that can be controlled remotely to turn lights on and off in various parts of the house to help make it seem like you are home.
5. Avoid advertising that shopping spree. Thieves look for and steal newly delivered boxes on your front porch, a method called porch pirating, so consider having them delivered elsewhere or requiring a signature for delivery. Thieves may also look at clues provided by your trash or recycling, which may indicate the new computer or flat-screen television inside.
6. Set a safety routine. Make sure you establish a routine where you regularly lock all doors, shut windows and turn on your alarm system every time you leave your home. Avoid leaving spare keys outside, under a planter or under a welcome mat, as thieves know most of the potential hiding places.
7. Manage visibility. Make sure you can see who is at your front door without opening it. Avoid placing valuables where they will be visible from the street, and do not place your home alarm panel in a place where people can see you arming it from the outside.
8. Protect your outdoor valuables. Burglars also target sheds, garages and other outdoor buildings. Secure your grill, lawn mower, bicycles and other outdoor gear.
9. Create a plan for when you are away. Hold your mail, stop your papers and ask a friend or neighbor to remove flyers from your property. Arrange for snow removal and lawn mowing so you do not advertise when you are away from home.

While you're thinking about your home security, why not take the opportunity to review your homeowners insurance? Contact your agent to make sure you have the coverage you need.