

Employers expect 12% jump in health insurance rates

By [WILL ASTOR](#) - 10/24/2011 12:27:23 PM

Area employers responding to the Rochester Business Alliances Inc.'s annual benefits survey expect to see another year of double-digit health insurance rate increases—an average 12 percent rise in January when 2012 rates kick in.

A total of 208 RBA members with combined employment of 102,990 responded to the survey. Only RBA members were polled, officials said.

High-deductible plans have lower monthly premiums but can hit enrollees with high out-of-pocket costs.

A high percentage of employers responding to the RBA survey said they would continue to pay some or all of employees' premiums. On average the group reports paying 73 percent of single-person plan, 66 percent of two-person, 65 percent of family-plan premiums and 69 percent of family plans without coverage for a spouse. Fewer respondents—19 percent in 2010 versus 22 percent this year—said they plan to pay the full cost of single workers' premiums in 2012.

The companies that insure most Rochester-area workers, Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield and MVP Health Care, this year asked the state Insurance Department to OK rate hikes of 8.8 percent to 17 percent and 8.9 percent to 19.9 percent respectively.

In July, the area's biggest health insurance carrier, Excellus, said most of its community-rated plans would see rate hikes topping out at 12.9 percent while some high-deductible plans would see increases in the 17.9 percent to 19.9 percent range. A few of its plans would see decreases ranging of 5 percent to 10 percent, the company said.

MVP said its large-group customers would see lower percentage increases; small-group customers would see rates rise at a higher rate.