



Find your fit

Things to consider when choosing between an HMO and a High Deductible PPO plan.

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Caltech provides access to medical plans that offer the coverage and care you need... and we're here to help you make educated choices that fit your life.

In this guide, we will explore HMOs and High Deductible PPOs, and you can decide which plan is best for you.



Start Here

What's an HMO?

This type of plan allows you to receive care only from an HMO-contracted provider. HMOs have low fixed copays and no deductibles but have higher premiums, and out-of-network care is not covered unless you have a referral.

What's a High Deductible PPO?

This type of plan allows you to receive care from any providers in-network or out-of-network. High Deductible PPO plans have an annual deductible but lower premiums. If enrolled in a High Deductible PPO plan, you have the unique opportunity to save through a Health Savings Account (HSA) to pay for health care expenses.

Medical Plan Terms to Know

Annual deductible: the money you must pay out of pocket each year before your plan starts sharing costs. If you're covering family member(s) in addition to yourself, an embedded deductible applies. That means each member of your family has an individual deductible amount. If any one of you meets the individual amount, the plan starts paying coinsurance for that person. If expenses for two or more of you reach the family deductible amount, all of you are considered to have met the deductible.

Coinsurance (typically for PPO plans): the percentage of your costs that you'll be responsible for paying once you've paid your deductible amount

Copays (typically for HMO plans): the flat dollar amount you pay each time you get care

Explanation of Benefits (EOB): lets you know whether or not the services you received are covered by the insurance company; the amount the plan pays for covered services, if you have not yet met your deductible; and how much you owe your health care provider

In-network: providers, pharmacies and facilities that offer special negotiated rates contracted with Anthem — find them at [anthem.com/ca/caltech](https://www.anthem.com/ca/caltech) > Click "Care"

Out-of-pocket maximum: the most you're required to pay out of pocket each year (deductible and coinsurance combined) for covered plan expenses before the plan covers expenses at 100%

Usual & Customary (UC): The amount insurance pays for a medical service based on what providers in the geographic area usually charge for the same or similar medical service. When you go out of network, you pay any amount your provider charges above UC, even after you meet your out-of-pocket maximum (exceptions may apply for emergency situations).

Choosing a Plan

How's a High Deductible PPO different from an HMO?

	Anthem HMO	Kaiser HMO	High Deductible PPO
Premiums	Higher premiums	Higher premiums	Lower premiums
Getting care	Use only providers within the HMO network — or pay the full cost of care (unless it's an emergency) Referrals required to see specialists	Use only providers within the Kaiser network — or pay the full cost of care (unless it's an emergency) Referrals required to see specialists	See any provider Pay less when you stay in network No referrals needed when you want to see a specialist
Paying for care	No deductible to meet Pay copays when you get care or medications, making costs more predictable	No deductible to meet Pay copays when you get care or medications, making costs more predictable	Pay out of pocket until you meet the deductible After deductible, pay coinsurance when you get care or medications
Tax advantaged accounts	Use an FSA to spend pre-tax dollars during the calendar year	Use an FSA to spend pre-tax dollars during the calendar year	Use an HSA to spend, save and even invest pre-tax dollars — with no time limit
Day-to-day considerations	Navigate the limited networks Follow referral processes to see specialists If you use an FSA, spend your dollars by year-end or they'll be forfeited	Navigate the limited networks Follow referral processes to see specialists If you use an FSA, spend your dollars by year-end or they'll be forfeited	Set aside funds in case you have major medical expenses Maximize your HSA tax advantages and savings opportunities

Visit MyBenefits (Campus) or Workday (JPL) for a side-by-side comparison of all plans.



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HSAs AND FSAs?

HSAs are better for saving, and FSAs are better for spending.

Click here or scan the QR code with your smartphone to learn more.



Let's Take a Look at Our Medical Plans in Actions

We offer a variety of medical plan options so you can choose what fits your lifestyle and needs. It's sometimes hard to decide among multiple options, so take a look at the examples below to see what different health care situations might look like in each of the medical plans.

These examples are for illustrative purposes only and intended to show you how individuals in different situations may go about choosing coverage that fits their needs and budget.



Meet Sanna

Sanna is a generally healthy non-smoker. She's married and her husband receives regular allergy shots. Sanna believes there is a chance she'll have a brief hospital stay in 2025.

Based on Sanna's situation and how she plans to use health care in 2025, the Kaiser HMO is the lowest-cost option. The Kaiser network of providers has worked well for Sanna and her husband in the past, so she chooses to enroll in this plan for 2025.

Medical Plan Options	High Deductible PPO	Anthem HMO	Kaiser HMO
Annual Paycheck Deduction (Employee + Spouse Coverage Tier)	\$1,848	\$5,472	\$4,524
Medical Needs			
Preventive Care Sanna and her husband get annual checkups	\$0 Sanna and her husband see in-network doctors.	\$0 Sanna and her husband see their PCPs, who coordinate their care.	\$0 Sanna and her husband see their PCPs, who coordinate their care.
Hospital Stay Sanna stays at a hospital for 2-nights. The hospital bill is \$8,000.	\$4,240 Sanna pays her \$3,300 individual deductible, and then she pays 20% of the remaining cost.	\$250 Sanna pays the \$250 copay for her hospital stay. There is no deductible to meet on this plan.	\$250 Sanna pays the \$250 copay for her hospital stay. There is no deductible to meet first on this plan.
Allergy Treatment Sanna's husband receives monthly allergy serum and shots to treat his ongoing allergies. The serum and shots cost \$1,500 and \$240, respectively, annually	\$1,740 Sanna's husband pays the full cost out of pocket because he hasn't met the individual deductible.	\$0 Sanna's husband's allergy treatments are 100% covered under this plan.	\$35 Sanna's husband's allergy treatments are 100% covered under this plan. There is a \$35 copay for his allergy test.
Total Out-of-Pocket Expense	\$5,980	\$250	\$285
Sanna's Total 2025 Medical Plan Spend (Total Out-of-Pocket Expenses plus Paycheck Deduction)	\$7,828	\$5,722	\$4,809





Meet Angela

Angela is married with two teenage daughters. She and her family are active and in good health, but she anticipates one emergency room visit as well as three urgent care visits for her family each year. In addition, her husband takes a generic migraine medication.

Based on Angela's situation and how she plans to use health care in 2025, the High Deductible PPO Plan is the lowest-cost option. She likes this plan not only for the lower cost, but also because she has access to the vast network of Anthem providers. Because she's saving money by enrolling in this plan, she's going to direct the savings into her HSA for future health care expenses.

Medical Plan Options	High Deductible PPO	Anthem HMO	Kaiser HMO
Annual Paycheck Deduction (Employee + Family Coverage Tier)	\$2,904	\$8,484	\$7,020
Medical Needs			
Preventive Care Angela and her family get annual checkups, and screenings such as mammograms and colonoscopies	\$0 Angela's family sees in-network doctors.	\$0 Angela's family sees their PCPs, who coordinate their care.	\$0 Angela's family sees their PCPs, who coordinate their care.
Emergency Room Visit Angela falls down some steps and requires a trip to the emergency room. The ER bill is \$3,000.	\$3,000 Angela pays \$3,000 out of pocket since she hasn't met the individual deductible of \$3,300.	\$250 Emergency room copay under this plan is \$250.	\$250 Emergency room copay under this plan is \$250.
Urgent Care Visit Angela's daughters each visit urgent care for sports-related injuries, and her husband visits urgent care for a high fever. Each visit is \$225.	\$675 Angela pays the full cost of the urgent care visit because she still needs to meet the other half of the family deductible.	\$75 Angela pays a \$25 urgent care copay for each urgent care visit.	\$75 Angela pays a \$25 urgent care copay for each urgent care visit.
Prescription for a Specialty Medication Angela's husband receives his migraine medication as a 30-day supply. The generic prescription costs \$15 for a 30-day supply or \$180/year.	\$180 Since Angela hasn't met the other half of the family deductible, she pays the full cost of the generic drug.	\$180 The plan covers generic drugs at \$15/30-day supply.	\$180 The plan covers generic drugs at \$15/30-day supply.
Total Out-of-Pocket Expense	\$3,855	\$505	\$505
Angela's Total 2025 Medical Plan Spend (Total Out-of-Pocket Expenses plus Paycheck Deduction)	\$6,759	\$8,989	\$7,525





Meet Darren

Darren is single with no kids and lives an active lifestyle as a rock climber. He is generally healthy and only visits the doctor for his annual preventive checkup.

In this scenario, Darren's lowest-cost option is the High Deductible PPO Plan. In case he gets hurt on a climb, he likes the idea of having options under this plan's broader Anthem network. Also, since Darren's saving money by choosing this plan, he decides to set aside \$1,000 in his HSA so he has money to help pay for health care expenses in the future.

Medical Plan Options	High Deductible PPO	Anthem HMO	Kaiser HMO
Annual Paycheck Deduction (Employee Only Coverage Tier)	\$780	\$2,232	\$1,860
Medical Needs			
Preventive Care Darren goes to the doctor for his annual preventive care visit.	\$0 In-network preventive care is covered at no cost to Darren.	\$0 In-network preventive care is covered at no cost to Darren.	\$0 In-network preventive care is covered at no cost to Darren.
Maintenance Medication Darren discovers at his annual preventive care visit that he has high cholesterol, so his doctor puts him on a generic statin medication.	\$120 Under this plan, Darren pays \$30 for a 90-day supply (\$120 for the full year).	\$120 Under this plan, Darren pays \$30 for a 90-day supply (\$120 for the full year).	\$109.50 Under this plan, Darren pays \$30 for a 100-day supply (\$109.50 for the full year).
Total Out-of-Pocket Expense	\$120	\$120	\$109.50
Darren's Total 2025 Medical Plan Spend (Total Out-of-Pocket Expenses plus Paycheck Deduction)	\$900	\$2,352	\$1,969.50
Additional Contributions			
HSA Since Darren saves a lot of money in premiums by choosing the High Deductible PPO Plan, he decides to take advantage of the HSA. He contributes \$1,000 to build up some savings for future health care expenses.	\$1,000		
Darren's Total 2025 Spend + HSA Contribution	\$1,900		



Learn More

If you want to...

Talk to Anthem about whether the High Deductible PPO might work for you

Contact...

Anthem concierge

At Campus in the HR Building
Ruben Rodriguez
(626) 395-6628
rrodrig5@caltech.edu

At JPL

Ramona Mickel
(303) 907-5983
ramona.mickel@anthem.com

Get more HSA information

HealthEquity

(866) 346-5800
24/7/365 support

Download the mobile app **HealthEquity** at healthequity.com/mobile-app

Learn more about an Anthem Plan

anthem.com/ca/caltech

(866) 820-0765 (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. PT)

Download the mobile app **Sydney Health** at anthem.com/member-resources/sydney-app

Learn more about the Kaiser HMO

California

my.kp.org/caltech

(800) 464-4000
(Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. PT)

Washington

my.kp.org/caltech

(888) 901-4636 (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. PT)

Download the **Kaiser Permanente** mobile app at healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/pages/mobile-app

Contact the Human Resources Benefit Offices

Caltech

(626) 395-6443 (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. PT)
hrbenefits@caltech.edu
hr.caltech.edu

JPL

AskHR
(818) 354-4447
(Monday – Thursday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. PT
Non-RDO Friday: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. PT
RDO Friday: Closed)

Submit an AskHR Inquiry at servicenow.jpl.nasa.gov/hrportal