

Nina Krammer ([00:01](#)):

From Via Benefits by WTW. Welcome to Eye on 65, a podcast for employers and plan sponsors looking to elevate their retiree healthcare benefits. Today I am speaking with Randy Mayberry about his experiences in choosing a plan in the individual marketplace premiums and more. I had the pleasure speaking with Randy a couple of years ago, and I'm excited to check back in with him today. Welcome. It's so great to reconnect with you.

Randy Mayberry ([00:29](#)):

I'll say the same. Thank you.

Nina Krammer ([00:31](#)):

So are you going on about five years retirement now? Does that sound right?

Randy Mayberry ([00:36](#)):

Um, officially retired three years ago. I've continued to work on a consulting agreement, but I, I retired three years ago in April.

Nina Krammer ([00:44](#)):

I see, I see. But then when you came on to receive your retiree medical benefits, that was a little bit longer ago.

Randy Mayberry ([00:52](#)):

It was May of 2020.

Nina Krammer ([00:56](#)):

Oh, wow. So you were a brand new retiree when we first spoke.

Randy Mayberry ([01:02](#)):

As brand new as I could be,

Nina Krammer ([01:05](#)):

<laugh>. So how's it been three years? There's a lot that has happened in these last three years. We had an entire pandemic. Have you been able to go out, do and enjoy your retirement since then?

Randy Mayberry ([01:19](#)):

I have thoroughly enjoyed, yes. I'll say yes, enjoyed my retirement, but I still go to work every day. I'm not quite ready to, um, hang it up completely. And I feel like I can still contribute somewhat and kind of the best of both worlds. And, uh, and as of today I become social security eligible and I, I know I've been eligible for years, but, you know, I turned 70 this month, so I'll start drawing Social security. So, uh,

Nina Krammer ([01:48](#)):

Happy early birthday.

Randy Mayberry ([01:51](#)):

Thank you.

Nina Krammer ([01:52](#)):

That is wonderful. Well, that's great. That's great to hear. So, another benefit that you've been working for your entire life coming to fruition. So if you could take us back, tell me how long were you with the employer who is providing you Via Benefits? Uh, uh, as, as a benefit,

Randy Mayberry ([02:12](#)):

I started here in 1985 and then I retired in 2020, just shy of my 35th anniversary.

Nina Krammer ([02:21](#)):

Wow. So you really were loyal to that, to the company. And, and in turn they offered you retiree medical. Was that always a given a retiree medical benefit or was there ever any concern that that might not be available to you upon retirement?

Randy Mayberry ([02:37](#)):

It was never a concern.

Nina Krammer ([02:40](#)):

Yeah, because nowadays it, it's no longer really a guarantee, uh, not necessarily in your scenario, but not many active employees even think that that might be an option available to them. And it could be even a benefit that respective employees might be interested in when looking at a prospective employer. So tell me every year, do you stay with the same plan? Do you reevaluate your options? What have, what has your annual enrollment process looked like over the years?

Randy Mayberry ([03:15](#)):

Okay, well, let's back up to the year. I retired 2020 and, um, sat down with my HR people and they told me about the Via Benefits group. He walked me through. Anytime you reach that stage in your life and you start signing up for Medicare, there's a lot of uncertainties. 'cause this, it's complicated, but once you start diving into it, it's not as complicated as you might think. But it went through a fairly significant questionnaire. I've been very, very comfortable with the decision we reached. I've been on Medicare Advantage. I, I did change after my first year, um, which was really driven by the very fact that, I mean, instead of paying a \$25 monthly premium with a zero premium, and I've been very well pleased with Medicare Advantage in totality. So I, I go back to my initial interview was given good advice.

Nina Krammer ([04:07](#)):

And when you changed plans after year one, was that something that you actively were seeking, looking to see if there was anything different available to you? Or was it some kind of communication that you received from Via Benefits to potentially reevaluate?

Randy Mayberry ([04:25](#)):

Uh, probably the latter. It is just something, is it October you start looking forward to the renewal of your plan? And again, I think it was as simple as the monthly premium. I said, look, why do I wanna pay a \$25 premium when I can get brand X for zero? I maintain a healthy lifestyle and, um, I, I do what they

advise, you know, your, your vaccinations when you hit 65 and your annual physical. And, um, so far so good. Um, I've got nothing but good advice.

Nina Krammer ([04:58](#)):

When you were an active employee, you were on a group benefit plan, and there is thought around, having a retirees on the group plan as well, because that's what retirees know, that's what they're comfortable, but then changing it so that they are selecting from a marketplace rather than receiving group benefits. What are your thoughts on that?

Randy Mayberry ([05:24](#)):

Well, I think you can look at the marketplace and choose a plan that best suits your needs as opposed to a, a group plan. Again, I'm, I'm 70 years old, I'll be 70 in two weeks. Um, I still maintain a very active lifestyle. I'm, I'm not ready to go sit in a chair and, and sit on the sofa all day.

Nina Krammer ([05:47](#)):

Do you think that your generation is unique, that you might be among one of the, um, first set of retirees, you've been around technology and you've been around this rapid pace of change and so many people your age still live very active lifestyles. Do you think that's unique this day and age among your age group, or has it always been that way and there's just been a misconception around it?

Randy Mayberry ([06:15](#)):

I think we are a little, my generation is unique in that if you take care of yourself, you can expect to live to be 95 or a hundred. Whether that's smoking cessation, I mean, you folks don't smoke like they used to folks, a lot of folks don't drink like they used to. Folks are going to live longer. I, I that's my theory. I think this, this generation is gonna live longer than previous generations.

Nina Krammer ([06:40](#)):

I think you're right, and I hope you're right, but you bring up a good point. There seems to be a lot more awareness around health in general, health and wellness and activities that you can either begin or give up to help prolong, your life. Is there anything that you have changed since retiring, whether you've stopped doing a certain activity or started doing a certain activity with that in mind?

Randy Mayberry ([07:05](#)):

I've lived a fairly healthy lifestyle for several decades, so, okay.

Nina Krammer ([07:10](#)):

Fair enough, fair enough. And what about, uh, taking up new activities, hobbies, sports?

Randy Mayberry ([07:15](#)):

I'm just a habitual walker. I have been for four decades or five decades. I, I, when I was young, I played basketball, I played volleyball. Um, I did a lot of activities. I still enjoy, I still play golf, but, um, you know I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm content with, um, just an everyday normal amount of exercise. Um, I mean, obviously when you're seventy, you're not out playing basketball and, and volleyball every day, but I can still get out and walk 18 holes of golf and enjoy that. And I'm, I'm very happy doing that, so, but I, I maintain a pretty healthy, active lifestyle.

Nina Krammer ([07:54](#)):

That is amazing. So it sounds like you've always been relatively healthy and just carrying it on into retirement, so that's wonderful. Um, what about, do you have any need or do you look into, uh, supplemental benefits? So some retirees that I've spoken with take advantage of silver sneakers or other similar, uh, types of benefits. Is that something that, that you are aware of or use?

Randy Mayberry ([08:26](#)):

I'm aware of it. I don't use it. Um, I just maintain my own exercise, um, regime. My wife and I each, um, she's, um, two much younger than me, but we, we both stay very active and, um, remain quite compatible with one another.

Nina Krammer ([08:44](#)):

So you mentioned, uh, your wife. Does she, um, is she a part of your retiree medical package or is that separate or is she separate from you?

Randy Mayberry ([08:49](#)):

I don't think it's quite as good as mine, but she, but she's got a good plan.

Nina Krammer ([08:52](#)):

So now tell me about that. Why do you think it's not quite as good as what you have?

Randy Mayberry ([08:56](#)):

Um, she has a few copays. She takes one or two, um, uh, prescription meds and, I mean, her, her plan is very solid, but, um, so far I think I like mine a little bit better.

Nina Krammer ([09:06](#)):

Okay. Well, I like to hear that <laugh>. Now tell me this year, uh, you're down to a \$0 premium, so you can't go any cheaper. I don't think you can get money back on your premiums, but are you satisfied with your plan looking to reevaluate? Uh, what plans are available to the, to you this year?

Randy Mayberry ([09:25](#)):

Unless something drastically changes in the next two or three months, I would give 99% probability I will resign, no reason to change. They provide what I need. I mean, I get, you know, two dental appointments a year free. I get an annual physical free. Um, I get an eye exam free. I mean, what could, what could be better

Nina Krammer ([09:50](#)):

Now, any prospective employers that are out there considering a marketplace for their retirees, what would you tell them? What advice might you give them?

Randy Mayberry ([10:03](#)):

Well, gosh, I mean, when anybody goes into that thing, into that marketplace, they're going to go in blind with somebody that will walk you through that decision making process, which is exactly what I got. I had no idea what I was getting into. Um, I keep going back to that gentleman three years ago. I

didn't know what I was getting into. He asked a lot of questions based on those answers. He made a recommendation and it, it is been solid as the Rock of Gibraltar.

Nina Krammer ([10:33](#)):

How long would you say that call was when you had that? Three years ago?

Randy Mayberry ([10:36](#)):

Oh gosh, 45 minutes. But I'm guessing it's been some years ago. But he asked a lot of detailed questions.

Nina Krammer ([10:44](#)):

So at any point did you ever feel rushed to make a decision or pressured to pick any particular plan or carrier?

Randy Mayberry ([10:51](#)):

No. No. None whatsoever. He asked the right questions and, and again, based on the answers, I think he made three or four recommendations that might fit my needs. He asked a lot of good questions.

Nina Krammer ([11:03](#)):

Looking back to when you first enrolled, do you have anything that you would've changed knowing what you know now? Or would you do everything the same?

Randy Mayberry ([11:10](#)):

I think I would do everything exactly the same. Uh, I, I just have had no problems at all. And, and one of the beauties of, of what I do is, you know, I get that Medicare statement. I think it comes in around mid-November, and all I do is download that form and then come January I send it to Via, I don't lift another finger. The reimbursements come in every month for my Medicare premiums. I mean, what can be easier than that?

Nina Krammer ([11:38](#)):

And with \$0 premiums, you're able to use those HRA dollars for other out-of-pocket expenses. Right?

Randy Mayberry ([11:47](#)):

It goes to pay my Medicare premiums. Then every month about the fifth day of the month, it hits my bank account and I don't have to lift another finger to the following November.

Nina Krammer ([11:57](#)):

That is great to hear. Knowing what you know now, and having been, a member with Via Benefits for several years now, is there anything that you would like to share with us that we could do better, that we could change, um, to improve the experience for our retirees?

Randy Mayberry ([12:15](#)):

It's easy for me because I have things preloaded, people that get these monthly, um, um, prescription costs or, you know, that can be a little burdensome. It could be a little scary to people because it's, it's, it's time consuming. And if you're not very comfortable with, with, uh, electronic communications, and it

could be a little burdensome, but hey, I mean, my employer gives us \$4,000 a year into our HRA, um, that's pretty darn valuable. Um, now some people may choose to say, Hey, look, I'll wait till end of 12 months, or I think you've got 15, you know, three months into the new year and, and, and accumulate all your, your out-of-pocket costs. But mine aren't done through, it's just, it's just straight through Medicare Premium. So mine is easy as it can be. Mine is a lot simpler than a lot of people's.

Nina Krammer ([13:07](#)):

Would it be fair, from what I'm hearing you say that to help keep things simple or easy, especially for those numbers who might not have it as straightforward as you do?

Randy Mayberry ([13:20](#)):

Mm-Hmm, <affirmative>. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I think that's a fair, but, but then again, how else do you do it? I mean, this is the, the, the \$4,000 comes to the retired employee only after you demonstrate you've spent the money, and there's no other way to do it than to submit invoices, copies or whatever, however you have to do it.

Nina Krammer ([13:39](#)):

And do you find that process easy to manage?

Randy Mayberry ([13:42](#)):

Well, it, it, it, it's extremely easy to manage for me.

Nina Krammer ([13:46](#)):

Well, Randy, thank you so much for your time and speaking with us. It'll be really helpful for, uh, employers to hear a retirees point of view on Via Benefits and the experience that goes with it. So thank you again so much.

Randy Mayberry ([14:02](#)):

Y'all are certainly welcome, and I appreciate all y'all have done to make this retirees last three years a little easier.

Nina Krammer ([14:09](#)):

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