

BY KATHRYN MAYER

TOP 10

AMERICA'S FITTEST CITIES

1) Washington D.C.

2) Minneapolis-St. Paul

3) Portland, Ore.

4) Denver

5) San Francisco

6) San Jose, Calif.

7) Seattle

8) San Diego

9) Boston

10) Sacramento

Source: American College of Sports Medicine



What families pay for health care

THE COST OF CARE for an average family covered by an employer-sponsored PPO is \$23,215 this year, according to Milliman's annual medical index.

Though the amount families pay for health coverage has more than doubled over the past decade, there is slightly better news this year: The 5.4 percent growth rate over last year is the lowest annual change since Milliman started keeping track in 2002.

According to the actuarial firm, employers pay the largest portion of health care costs, contributing \$13,520 per year, or 58 percent of the total. The employee picks up the rest of the tab via payroll deductions (\$5,908) and out-of-pocket costs (\$3,787).

Still, consumers are increasingly picking up higher shares of the coverage costs.

In each of the past four years, the index revealed, employees have assumed an increasing percentage of the total cost of care. The total employee cost increased by approximately 32 percent from 2010 to 2014, while employer costs (premium contributions) increased by

\$23,215

cost of care for an average family covered by an employer-sponsored PPO

26 percent.

"The good news is that the annual rate of increase has been declining for years," said Chris Girod, co-author of the Milliman Medical Index. "The bad news is that this represents yet another \$1,100 jump in costs for this typical family. Even if we are bending the cost curve, there are few other household expenses that increase at four figures per year."

On average, pharmacy costs increased 4.5 percent over 2013.

So far, researchers said, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has had "little direct impact" on the cost of care for a family. But that could change.

Scott Wertz, co-author of the MMI, called PPACA the "elephant that's about to enter the room."

"There are provisions in the law that may contribute either upward or downward pressure on employer-sponsored plans; it will take some time before we know how health reform is affecting a typical family that receives coverage through an employer."