



Charter schools often face challenges providing competitive employee health benefits due to rising costs and limited budgets, impacting teacher compensation and overall school operations. While some charters offer comprehensive benefits, others struggle to compete with traditional public schools, and the rising costs can affect other essential areas like curriculum and resources. [1, 2, 3]

Challenges and Considerations:

- **Rising Costs:** Health insurance costs have been increasing faster than per-pupil revenue growth, making it difficult for charter schools to offer competitive benefits. [1, 1]
- **Budget Constraints:** Charter schools often have limited budgets compared to traditional public schools, and rising health benefit costs can strain these resources. [1, 1, 2, 2, 4]
- **Teacher Retention:** Competitive health benefits are crucial for attracting and retaining qualified teachers, but charter schools may struggle to provide them due to budgetary limitations. [1, 2, 2, 3, 3]
- **Impact on Other Areas:** The focus on health benefits can sometimes divert resources from other important areas like curriculum development, technology upgrades, and staff training. [1, 1, 3, 3, 5]
- **Ancillary Benefits:** Some charter schools are exploring ancillary benefits like financial assistance for medical expenses or mental health support to address the challenges of rising costs and stress on teachers. [2, 2]
- **Retiree Benefits:** In some cases, charter schools may face issues with retiree benefits, especially when employees switch to traditional public schools before retirement, leading to cost-shifting concerns. [6, 6]
- **ERISA and Charter Schools:** Some charter schools may be exempt from ERISA (Employee Retirement Income Security Act) regulations, impacting how they offer and administer retirement and health benefits. [7, 7, 8, 8]

Examples and Solutions:

- **Absorbing Cost Increases:** Some charter schools are absorbing the full annual cost increase of health insurance to ensure employee coverage remains competitive. [9, 9]
- **Flexible Benefit Options:** Schools may offer flexible benefit packages to cater to individual employee needs, including different levels of coverage and ancillary benefits. [2, 2, 10, 10]
- **Negotiating with Insurers:** Charter schools can explore strategies like negotiating with insurance providers to lower costs and improve coverage. [2, 2, 11, 12]
- **Focusing on Wellness:** Promoting employee wellness programs and providing resources for managing stress can help reduce healthcare costs and improve employee well-being. [2, 2, 10, 10]
- **Transparency and Communication:** Open communication with employees about benefit plans and cost-saving measures can help build trust and understanding. [13, 13, 14]

[1] <https://www.educationnext.org/health-benefit-costs-represent-serious-threat-charter-school-success/>
[2] <https://extensishr.com/resource/blogs/ancillary-benefits-helping-charter-schools-retain-top-talent/>
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[4] <https://www.go2rose.com/the-pros-and-cons-of-attending-a-charter-school-vs-a-traditional-public-school/>
[5] <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7899167/>
[6] <https://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-lifetime-benefits-20160417-story.html>
[7] <https://www.debofsky.com/articles/erisa-does-not-cover-charter-school-teachers/>

[8] <https://thelink.ascensus.com/articles/2021/11/17/erisa-vs-non-erisa-403b-plans>
[9] <https://corporate.charterschools.com/newsroom/charter-launches-free-tuition-program-for-employees>
[10] <https://ffbenefits.ffga.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/252/2021/07/21-22-A-BOOKLET.pdf>
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[13] <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/employee-benefits-charter-schools-juliet-lucero>
[14] <https://millercares.com/blogs/how-communication-can-help-employees-navigate-rising-healthcare-costs/>