

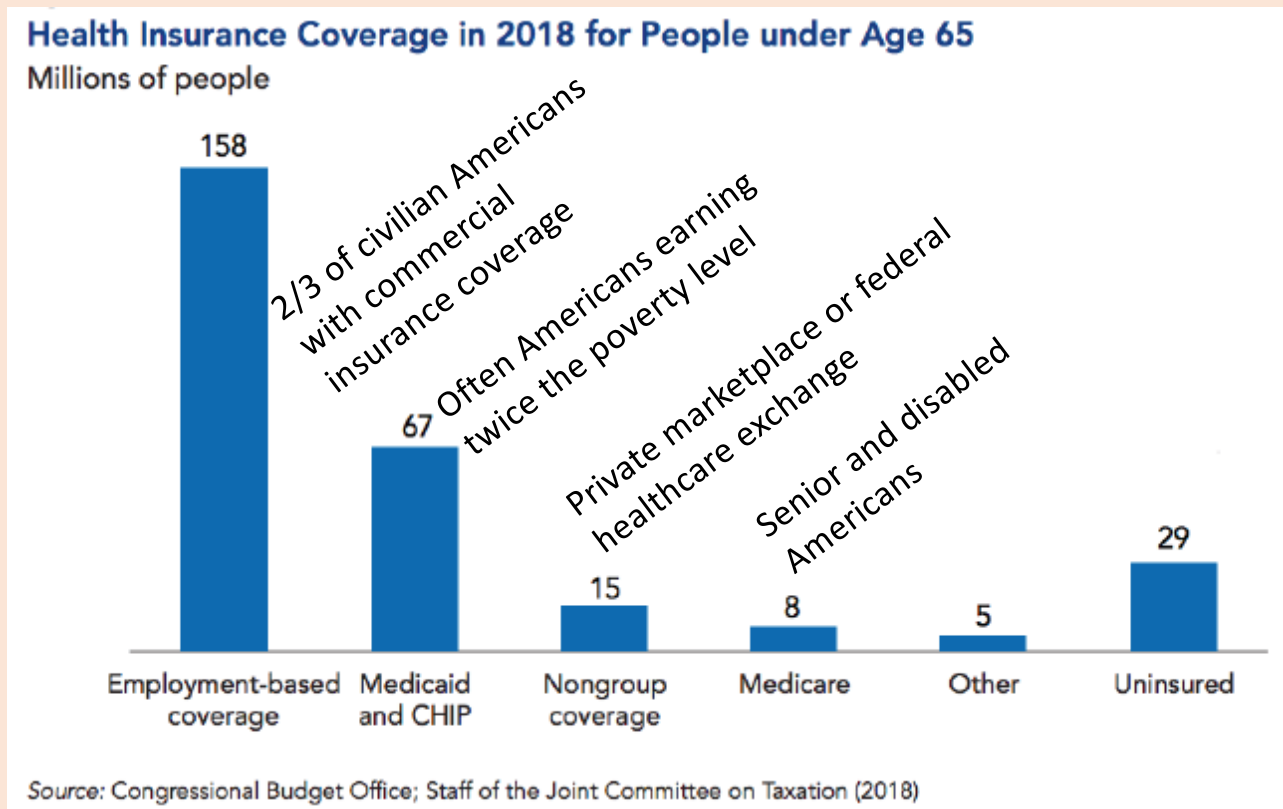
# Healthcare Insurance Considerations for Technical Writers

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# Introduction to Healthcare Insurance



## Current Employment Status

How might you be considering employment options as a technical writer?

- A. Salaried worker (tax form W-2)
  - working at a salaried annual rate
  - working for a company owned by someone else
  - working at your own company
  
- B. Independent contractor, freelancer (tax form 1099)
  - working on an hourly, monthly, or project rate
  - using SSN or EIN to perform business

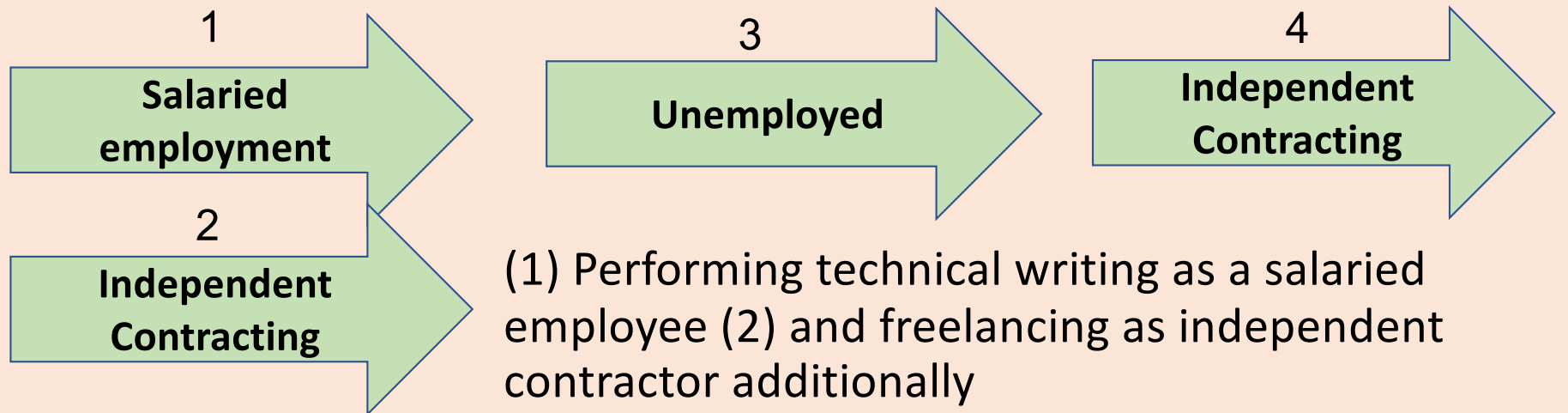
# General Considerations when Evaluating New or Existing Healthcare Insurance Coverage

- A. How is your health? (coverage of general preventative care vs. managing chronic health conditions)
- B. Healthcare providers considered “in network”
- C. Total Cost: Cost of Premiums vs. Deductibles vs. Co-Pay
- C. Coverage of Prescriptions (Tiers), Vision, Dental



Image from freepik.com

# Employment status and how it affects your healthcare coverage options



(1) Performing technical writing as a salaried employee (2) and freelancing as independent contractor additionally

(3) Recent employment but currently unemployed

(4) Performing technical writing as a contracted worker for a larger company or for yourself (your own business)

# Healthcare Coverage Options: Salaried Employment

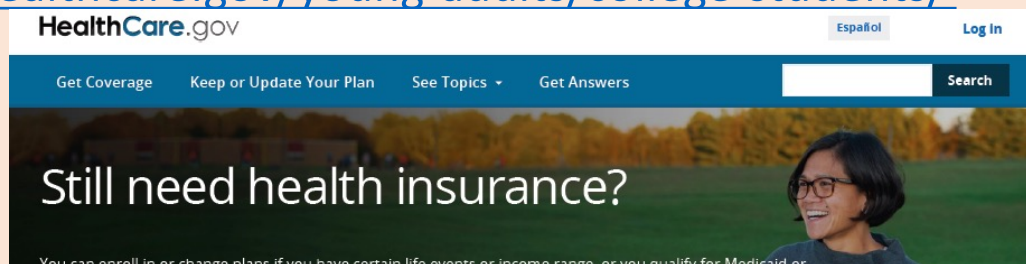


**Salaried  
employment**

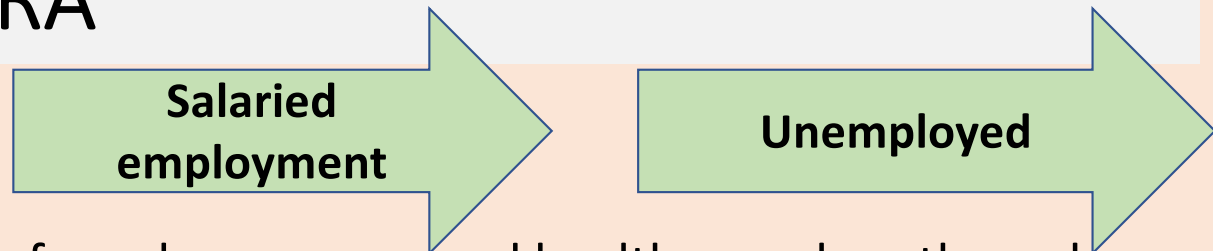
- Employer sponsored healthcare plans from the company you work for
- Employer sponsored healthcare plans from company your spouse or partner works for
- In absence of healthcare offerings, company provides bonus to cover healthcare costs
- Federal healthcare exchange (Affordable Care Act) might be more affordable than employer-offered plans

# Healthcare Coverage Options: ACA and federal vs. state marketplaces

- Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) signed into law 2010 “Obamacare”
- States choose to participate in:
  - *federal healthcare exchange* (this is what Missouri does with nine carriers participating) <https://www.healthcare.gov/see-plans/#/>
  - *state-based marketplace* (SBM) which offer similar type of plans that would be offered in federal marketplace
- Info about coverage of children/students through federal healthcare exchange <https://www.healthcare.gov/young-adults/college-students/>



# Healthcare Coverage Option between Positions: COBRA



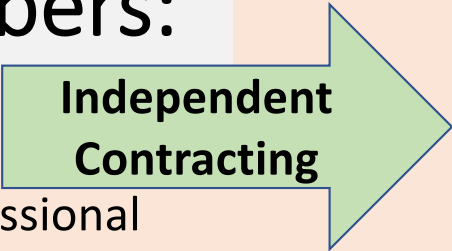
- Can seek continuation of employer-sponsored healthcare plans through COBRA (mandated by the government), for yourself, previously covered, or potential new family member

<https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/4727>

- Gather information from your current provider on number of days between coverage loss from current plan to elect COBRA coverage, if relevant how and when dependents can be added (terms) during event of electing for COBRA coverage
- *Pros*: Same healthcare coverage continued, continuation of care with same in network care providers
- *Cons*: Only covered for 18-24 months after you leave salaried position, you pay 100% when no longer employed by past employer when your past employer was covering all or some of past cost during your position



# Healthcare Coverage for independent contractors/freelancers and family members:



**Independent  
Contracting**

- Coverage through a spouse or partner's existing plan
- Coverage offered through group plans from trade associations or professional organizations
- Federal or state healthcare exchange/marketplace (ACA), Medicare/Medicaid
- Guidance through the plan selection process with independent health insurance broker/agent
- Setting up a Health Savings Account (HSA) or other health spending accounts
- If relevant, Medicaid, Medicare and/or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Scaling your business (from yourself to multiple employees) to secure coverage for several employees in a small business\*

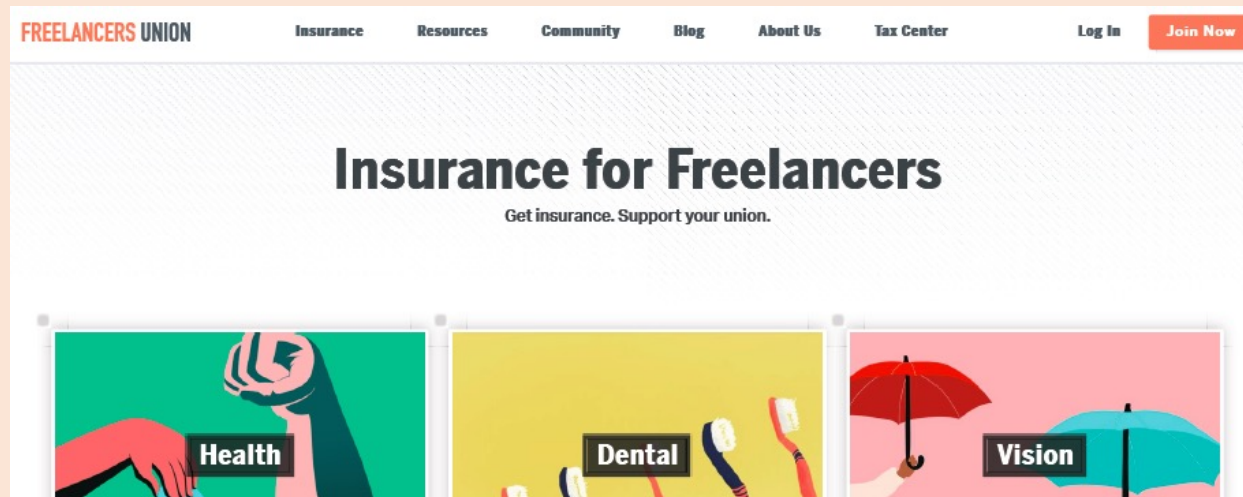
Resources on general considerations:

<https://www.valuepenguin.com/self-employed-health-insurance>

\*Complex business decision when and whether to expand your numbers should not be taken solely to obtain insurance coverage.

# Healthcare Coverage through Professional Organizations

- Freelancers Union can provide health, dental, vision coverage
- Con: Have to pay fees to be part of union or professional organization
- Pro: Potential access to healthcare coverage
- <https://www.freelancersunion.org/insurance/>



# Health Savings Account (HSA)

- Must have high deductible health plan to participate
- Federal program, allowed in Missouri but not all states
- HSA can be started by employers or self-employed individuals (freelancers)
- Tax-free way to save for healthcare expenses
- Some other types of health spending accounts in addition to HSAs: health reimbursement account (HRA) and flexible spending account (FSA).

## Resources:

<https://www.bendhsa.com/hsas-for-small-business>

[https://insurance.mo.gov/consumers/smallbusiness/hsa\\_index.php](https://insurance.mo.gov/consumers/smallbusiness/hsa_index.php)

<https://www.anthem.com/ca/blog/health-insurance-basics-what-you-need-to-know-about-hsas-hras-and-fsas/>

# Healthcare Coverage for small businesses

- Coverage can be obtained for as few as 2 employees or more than that
- Coverage for employees collectively at a small business may be more expensive than individual coverage on the open marketplace
- Small business Health Options Program (SHOP) through ACA (1-50 FTE)
- Can be helpful to work with healthcare broker/agent
- When talking with agents/sales personnel at companies, determine minimum number of employees in the small business to sign up. Does the rate change with a certain threshold of employees?

## Resources:

<https://www.ehealthinsurance.com/resources/small-business/top-7-small-business-health-insurance-providers?allid=goo13279000&sid=dsaresourcearticle&skwcid=AL!4462!3!452428941012!!!g!!&gclid=EA!alQobChMI-b u5Zb3-AIV wytBh0ITg1MEAYAAEgleV D BwE>

<https://www.healthcare.gov/small-businesses/shop-rates/missouri/>

Thank you!

Let's talk about your experiences with healthcare coverage in different employment settings as a technical writer!