



Why ICHRA Is Catching On + Why Brokers Shouldn't Ignore It

What if offering health benefits didn't mean navigating carrier renewals, juggling plan designs, or trying to make one-size-fits-all coverage work for a workforce that's anything but? That's the promise, and increasingly the reality, of the Individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangement (ICHRA).

In just a few years, ICHRA has grown from a niche option to a major player in the employer-sponsored benefits space. And it's not just small startups kicking the tires anymore. Adoption is accelerating across businesses of all sizes, from mom-and-pop shops to large employer groups.

So, what's behind the growing appeal? And why are benefits consultants in the best position to lead the conversation?

PUTTING EMPLOYEES IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Unlike traditional group plans that offer limited choices, ICHRA gives employees the power to shop the Marketplace for ACA-compliant coverage that fits their needs. That might mean a Silver plan with a low deductible for a young family, or a Gold plan with richer coverage for someone managing a chronic condition.

And employees are taking full advantage. According to the HRA Council's 2025 Growth Trends Report, nearly 70% of ICHRA enrollees chose Silver or Gold-tier plans. This is clear evidence that when given the option, people don't default to the cheapest coverage. They choose what makes sense for their health and finances.¹

For employers, that shift has a ripple effect. HR teams report fewer complaints, less confusion, and a lot more gratitude. After all, it's hard to grumble about the benefits department when you picked the plan yourself.

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Nearly 70% of employees choose Silver or Gold plans when given the option. ICHRA puts them in control — and they're choosing smarter coverage.

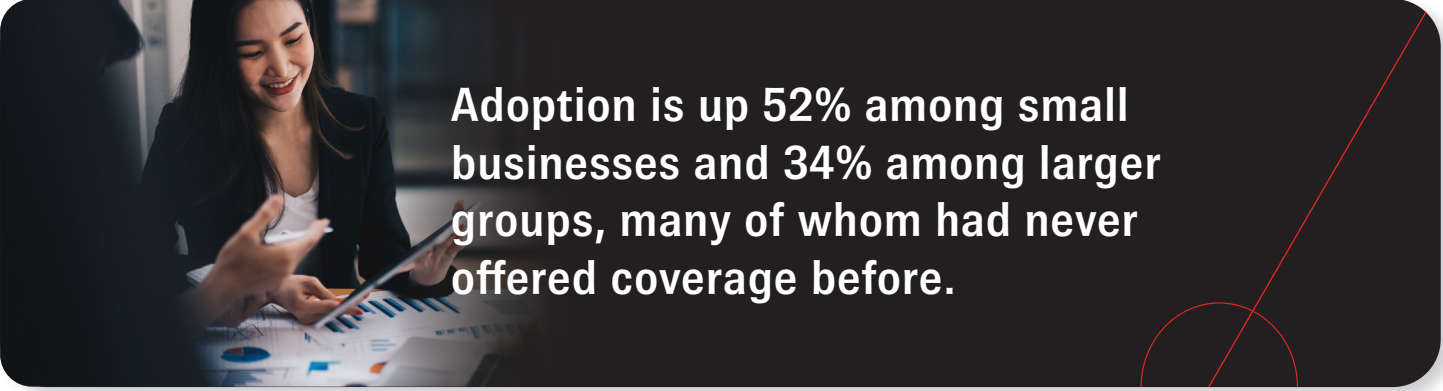


A MODERN BENEFIT FOR A MODERN WORKFORCE

We've all heard it. Today's employees want personalization. That's true whether they're selecting hybrid schedules or health benefits. ICHRA lets employers say "yes" to that desire for choice without taking on the cost or complexity of managing multiple plans in-house.

That kind of flexibility is resonating in today's competitive job market. The 2025 Deft Research ICHRA Study shows that employers who've switched to ICHRA overwhelmingly plan to stick with it. In fact, 88% expect to continue offering it for at least the next three years.²

And employees? They're just as satisfied. More than half of surveyed employers said their workers are happier with ICHRA than they were with traditional group plans.³ It's a win for recruitment, retention, and employee morale.



Adoption is up 52% among small businesses and 34% among larger groups, many of whom had never offered coverage before.

NUMBERS DON'T LIE: ICHRA IS ON THE RISE

Curious how fast ICHRA is growing? Here's what the data shows:

- Small business adoption is up 52% year over year, according to the HRA Council.⁴
- Large employer adoption is up 34%, with the 100–199 employee segment spiking by nearly 50%.⁵
- More than 83% of new adopters in 2025 had previously offered no coverage at all.⁶

In other words, ICHRA is a perfect entry point into the benefits space for businesses that might otherwise opt out. That opens the door for brokers to build relationships with new clients and deliver long-term value.


CONSULTANTS: YOUR MOVE

While ICHRA momentum is real, there's a catch. Many employers still don't know it exists. The Deft Research study found that 46% of employers not offering ICHRA had never even heard of it. Even more surprising? Only 27% of those who were aware said they learned about it from their benefits consultant.⁷

That's a missed opportunity, and one that's easily corrected.

The same study showed that when consultants proactively introduce ICHRA, client satisfaction increases significantly. It's a simple equation. When you bring solutions to the table, especially ones that reduce cost and boost satisfaction, you strengthen your relationship and build trust.

In a market where retention matters just as much as acquisition, that's worth its weight in gold.



Nearly half of employers still haven't heard of ICHRA. Most aren't learning about it from their broker. That's a gap just waiting to be filled.

BREAKING THE MYTHS

For some, ICHRA still feels like the great unknown. Will employees be confused? Will networks be too limited? Will it cost more than expected?

In reality, many of those fears don't hold up. According to employers who've made the switch:

- Onboarding is smoother than expected. The biggest challenge is educating employees, not implementation.
- Participation is up, not down. ICHRA isn't driving workers away. It's helping more people get covered.
- Costs are under control. For most employers, ICHRA delivers real savings without reducing access to quality care.

And let's not forget. The individual market itself is stronger than ever. Younger, healthier enrollees are entering the pool via ICHRA, helping stabilize premiums and improve plan choice nationwide.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

There's no single "right" way to offer benefits. But employers are asking different questions now. They want flexibility, value, and guidance they can trust.

ICHRA has moved beyond trial status. It's working for real businesses and real people. As it continues to grow, it opens the door for advisors to bring fresh solutions and lasting results.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The numbers are clear, but what matters more is what they mean. ICHRA is helping real people get the coverage they need. For brokers and consultants, it provides a practical way to support employers with a benefit that fits today's workforce.

Employers are seeing fewer complaints, and employees are selecting stronger coverage. Brokers are finding new opportunities in markets that were once out of reach. ICHRA continues to grow because it answers real needs with a simple and sustainable solution. Now is the time to take it seriously.

Ready to explore how ICHRA could work for your clients? Contact your CRC Benefits team to learn more.

YOUR ICHRA QUICK CHECK

- + It's gaining ground. Adoption is up 52% among small businesses and 34% among large employers. Many new adopters hadn't offered coverage before, making ICHRA an on-ramp to benefits—and a new business opportunity for brokers.
- + Employees actually like it. Nearly 70% of ICHRA participants are choosing Silver or Gold-tier plans. With more control, employees are more engaged and more satisfied with their coverage.
- + The window is wide open. Nearly half of employers still haven't heard of ICHRA, and most aren't learning about it from their current broker. That means there's plenty of room for you to step in and lead the conversation.

CONTRIBUTORS

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END NOTES

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