

DENVER  
**BUSINESS  
JOURNAL**

OCTOBER 18, 2004

## Great-West tries credit card program

Great-West Healthcare is rolling out a program to allow people to cover out-of-pocket health expenses with a payroll-deduction credit card.

Greenwood Village-based Great-West, a division of Great-West Life & Annuity Insurance Co., is partnering with E-Duction of Blue Bell, Penn., for the pilot program.

The program is open to employers with consumer-driven or other high-deductible health plans. Employees of those companies will be issued a Clear Card, which is used in the same way as a credit, debit or check

card to pay for out-of-pocket costs. The charges are then deducted from the employee's paycheck.

For medical expenses greater than \$199, the charge is carried interest-free for six months. Below that amount, expenses are paid interest-free via payroll deduction over two months.

Great-West surveyed consumers recently and discovered 39 percent of those who responded said they didn't have money set aside for health care costs, and another 17 percent said they couldn't pay a

\$1,000 deductible.

Cindy Donohue, vice president of marketing and product development at Great-West Healthcare, said consumer-driven health plans typically charge lower premiums, but come with higher out-of-pocket costs, "which can create issues for many who might have limited resources. Too often, if consumers cannot make payments, they shift the outstanding costs to providers, which creates bad debt for the providers."