



## How is Healthcare Coverage Similar to Non-Alcoholic Beer?

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Seems like an odd comparison, but when I recently read a profile of the founder of **Athletic Brewing Company** in the **Wall Street Journal**, the similarities between the two seemingly unrelated products jumped out at me.

When Bill Shufelt embarked on building a company that was going to sell only non-alcoholic beer, he already knew what the problem was: no one likes non-alcoholic beer. As a beer drinker with several decades of experience, I can attest to that. Why the unpopularity? Non-alcoholic beer doesn't taste good.

In regard to healthcare, no one likes paying for Healthcare Coverage. Why the unpopularity? Because healthcare insurance for people is way too expensive, especially if you are young & healthy. In that case, you are paying two to three times a month what you should be paying to subsidize seniors like me who use up a dis-proportionate amount of actual Healthcare spending. According to government statistics, 5% of the US population consume 50% of healthcare spending. Someone has to pay for that. That someone is you.

Healthcare coverage used to be great. You paid a nominal amount every month to provide coverage and a sense of security for your family, with a reasonable deductible before full coverage kicked in. Today, premiums alone are oftentimes \$1,000/month or more, with deductibles of \$3,000 to \$5,000+ per person before any medical procedure or assistance is actually paid for. In essence, traditional healthcare insurance for most people has become very expensive catastrophic coverage only, and the meter starts running again at the start of the following year. It's no wonder that over 30 million Americans have no health insurance at all because they simply cannot afford it.

In many cases, individuals do not feel the full impact of the cost of healthcare coverage, because the companies they work for greatly subsidize the amount they are on the hook for. The result of this is higher prices for goods & services, fewer people being employed by many companies, and lower margins that put survival at risk for some companies. How many companies had to pull the plug and close up shop in the last 10 years because they could no longer be competitive due to what they paid for healthcare insurance? The high cost of healthcare insurance impacts everyone, whether you are paying for it directly or not.

When Bill Shufelt complained to his wife that someone needed to fix non-alcoholic beer (make it taste good), her response to him was, YOU need to fix non-alcoholic beer. Fortunately, Bill had the brains and the means to put the process in motion that ultimately became **Athletic Brewing Company**. He also knew the math. In surveys at the time (2017), 55% of adults said they would be likely to drink non-alcoholic beer if it tasted good (or actually tasted like beer). At the time, non-alcoholic beer accounted for only 3/10 of one percent of beer

sales in the USA. The opportunity was enormous! Fast forward to 2023 and **Athletic Brewing Company** did \$90+ Million in sales! That number will only continue to grow and grow and grow as beer drinkers discover there is a non-alcoholic beer that actually tastes like beer, and good beer at that!

In Healthcare, the opportunity for savings is much larger. And the good news is, the solution for greatly reducing health coverage costs has existed for over 3 decades! What, no one ever told you?

Healthcare Sharing has existed since the 1980's, but outside of religious organizations and the Amish & Mennonite communities, almost no one was aware of it. After the passing of **Obama Care** in 2010, it experienced rapid growth due to the **ACA Individual Mandate**, because if you were part of a Health Sharing network, that counted as having Health Insurance, and kept you out of a Tax Penalty situation. The Individual Mandate has since gone away, but Healthcare Sharing has exploded over the last decade, growing at over 1,000 percent, as people discover the great cost savings and much better overall experience it offers compared to traditional healthcare insurance.

Why has it grown so fast? Because once people became familiar with it, they realized they can stop overpaying for Healthcare Insurance. For those that qualify, the savings are significant.

Why did the beers and the business of the **Athletic Brewing Company** grow so fast? Because once people became familiar with it, they realized they could enjoy the great taste of beer when they didn't want to feel the effects of alcohol.

Just as regular or non-alcoholic beer is not for everyone, there are limits to who can take advantage of Healthcare Sharing. It is limited to people who do not have a medical pre-condition, like diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc. By not covering people with expensive pre-existing conditions (who are covered by corporate MEC plans in companies with over 50 employees, or by Obamacare for individuals), the costs for everyone else is greatly reduced.

Not overindulging.... Not overpaying.... Tastes Great! Less Costly! It just might catch on...