

<http://www.healthcarepayernews.com/content/healthpocketcom-launched-former-ehealth-executives#.U6KFWvmSzNo>

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## HealthPocket.com launched by former eHealth executives

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**By:** Anthony Brino

Two former eHealth executives have launched a free consumer information website called HealthPocket.com, aimed at bringing more transparency to insurance markets.

Going live November 14, HealthPocket.com functions somewhat like eHealthInsurance.com, with a Facebook-like interface. Users can search their zip codes for available individual, family, Medicare, Medicaid and subsidized plans, and can also add find more specific plans by entering date of birth, gender and tobacco use.

[HealthPocket.com](#) mines publicly available information on health plans available in a given market using government, nonprofit and private sources, listing coverage and benefits and offering quality and value ranking, using CMS ratings for Medicare plans.

The site does not sell user data, and the business plan is to be supported by advertising revenue, said Steve Zalenick, HealthPocket's executive director for consumer strategy and development.

HealthPocket.com, and its page on Facebook, is designed to promote consumer feedback and ratings, Zalenick said, somewhat similar to Amazon.com or Angieslist.com. At the same time, he said, amid digital era privacy concerns, "it was important to us to show people that you can find this information without us knowing who you are."

Zalenick, who previously worked at AARP, said the goal is to be an objective source of information, without health plans paying to have products listed in their search results. Existing online health insurance sites, he said, tend to "steer consumers only toward the health plans that have paid to be one of the options, which skews the results."

**[See also: [WellStar acquires assets of Center for Health Transformation](#)]**

HealthPocket.com's founders, Bruce Telkamp and Sheldon Wang, say they started the site in part because many Americans are overpaying for health insurance and often selecting ill-suited plans. Detailed information on available health plans in a given market has tended to be "suppressed," said Telkamp.

The site's Facebook page had about 30 "likes" as of mid-November, but the hope is that first-time insurance consumers, or people taking a more active role in their insurance purchasing, will gravitate towards the site as a resource. Especially with [the growth of the retail insurance market and private and public exchanges](#), many Americans may soon be making more decisions about their health plans.

After its design earlier this year, HealthPocket [raised \\$2 million](#) in August from the Menlo Park-based Lightspeed Venture Partners, and it is largely a product of Silicon Valley, with an entrepreneurial tech

ethos. HealthPocket recently Tweeted a quote from a doctor in 1966: "The computer will probably have the greatest impact on medical science since the microscope."

For most of the 2000s, both Telkamp and Wang were executives at eHealth Inc, the parent company of eHealthInsurance.com, one the largest private health insurance exchanges ready to vie for the millions of new health insurance customer expected to start buying plans in 2013 and 2014.

Telkamp, previously an attorney with a Bay Area software firm, worked in eHealth's business and marketing operations and Wang, who has a background physics and informatics, led eHealth' s tech operations and in 2003 launched its China subsidiary.