

## Hot Diggity Dog! Ward and Smith Adds Pet Health Insurance Benefit

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**Ward and Smith recently announced that the firm is offering discounted pet health insurance through The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) as part of the 2020 employee benefits package.**

Open enrollment is going on now. ASPCA plans are customizable based on individual needs, including coverage levels, policy limits, and deductibles. Ward and Smith employees can get a customized and discounted pet insurance quote that will best fit their individual circumstances, and provide peace of mind for the future.

Michael Christman, the firm's Director of Human Resources, explains, "It's not easy for a pet parent to have to weigh medical treatment their pet needs against other needs because of cost. Pet insurance makes it easier to say 'yes' to recommended treatments." He continued, "With most employees having at least one pet, it made sense for us to offer discounted health insurance for pets. And the response is already positive. I heard 'This is awesome! Thank you!'"

At Ward and Smith, the benefits we offer our attorneys and staff continue to stack up. We believe that if we take excellent care of our people, they will continue to take excellent care of our clients. We've been enhancing our benefit offerings to ensure they are competitive and cost-effective. Recent changes include:

- **Paid Parental Leave:** the firm recently enhanced its Paid Parental Leave policy by making it gender-neutral. Neither parent must identify as the primary caregiver. The purpose of the Paid Parental Leave policy is to provide parents a period of paid time off for activities related to the care and wellbeing of their newborn or adopted child, as well as time for bonding. Eligible employees now receive up to 12 weeks paid time off commencing with the date of birth, or the date of placement of an adopted child new to the home.
- **Student Loan Paydown Benefit:** Ward and Smith was one of the first firms to offer a landmark benefit that helps attorneys pay down their student loan debt. Student loan debt—driven by the rising cost of higher education—is a pain point for recent graduates. Through Gradifi, eligible attorneys receive \$100 per month to help pay down their existing student loans, for up to five years. Over time, this helps reduce an attorney's student loan principal and interest obligation and shortens their loan payoff period.
- And our previously announced Wellness Initiatives and Flexible Workplace Policy