

Mayfield & Associates

A PRIVATE INSURANCE EXCHANGE

Key Points To Consider When Purchasing An Annuity

In order to make an informed decision when considering whether or not to buy an annuity. It is extremely important to make a decision that is best for you. Before you buy any annuity, do your research so you understand who you are doing business with and what you are buying! Here are a few ways to protect yourself:

- ❑ Verify that the company and agent are licensed. In order to sell insurance in your state, companies and agents must be licensed. To confirm the credentials of an insurance company or agent, contact your state insurance department and ask the following questions:
 - Is the company licensed in your state?
 - Is the company licensed to sell the line of insurance you are interested in purchasing?
 - Is the agent licensed in your state and a legitimate representative of the company?
 - Does the company have a good record of handling complaints?
 - Have any complaints been filed against the agent?
- ❑ Check the company's credit rating. Legitimate insurers have their "credit worthiness" rated by independent agencies such as Standard & Poor's or A.M. Best Co. Our current company ratings are available on our website at www.MidlandNational.com. Always review the product features before you decide to buy an annuity. Terms and conditions of each annuity product will vary. Before you purchase, make sure you understand how it works, and any fees and charges you will pay.
- ❑ Compare information for similar annuity products from several companies. Comparing products may help you make a better decision.
- ❑ Ask your agent and/or the company for an explanation of anything you don't understand.
- ❑ Keep detailed records. As you complete your research and decide to purchase a particular annuity product, it's important to keep detailed records. Get all rate quotes and key information in writing. Once you've made a purchase, keep a copy of all paperwork you complete and sign, as well as any correspondence, special offers and payment receipts. You should receive your original contract (not a photocopy) within 30 to 60 days of purchase. If you do not receive your annuity contract, contact the company or agent immediately.
- ❑ Before signing an application, have a trusted advisor or family member review the paperwork.
- ❑ Never issue a check to an agent or agency. Checks should always be made payable to the insurance company.

Watch for the following red flags, which serve as warnings of possible deceptive sales practices:

- ❑ *High-pressure sales pitch.* If a particular group or agent has contacted you repeatedly, and it makes you uncomfortable or aggravated, trust your instincts and steer clear. Make sure to take the time you need to make an informed decision.
- ❑ *Quick-change tactics.* Skilled scam artists will try to prey on your "time fears." They may try to convince you to change coverage quickly without giving you the opportunity to do adequate research.
- ❑ *Unwilling or unable to prove credibility.* A licensed agent will be more than willing to show adequate credentials.
- ❑ Remember, if it seems too good to be true, it probably is!
- ❑ If you suspect you've been a victim of deceptive sales practices, or you have a specific question and can't get the answers you need from an agent, contact the insurance company. If you need additional help, contact your state insurance department.