

ECFC Members Stay Busy on the Hill

Seven ECFC members had meetings with nearly 20 Representatives, Senators and staff members to specifically discuss H.R. 1004, the Medical Flexible Spending Account Improvement Act.

Representatives Charles Boustany (R-7th, LA) and John Larson (D-1st, CT) introduced the bipartisan legislation, which would eliminate the “Use It or Lose It” rule by allowing account holders to cash-out unused balances with the amount treated as taxable wages.



The objective of the recent ECFC Hill visits was twofold: (1) to build support for the House legislation -- particularly among Members who serve on the Ways & Means Committee and (2) to secure introduction of companion legislation in the Senate. Overall, the meetings were very productive and positive. They were a successful follow up to the 100+ Hill meetings ECFC coordinated during the Spring 30th Annual ECFC Conference in March 2011.

Since the recent Hill visit, Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee and Representative Erik Paulsen (R-3rd, MN) introduced the “Family and Retirement Health Investment Act of 2011.” The legislation makes a number of changes to strengthen and expand health savings accounts (HSAs) and flexible spending accounts (FSAs). Specific provisions in the legislation would:

- allow a husband and wife to make catch-up contributions to the same HSA;
- remove the requirement that an individual have a physician’s prescription to obtain HSA or FSA reimbursement for OTC drugs;
- allow individuals to roll-over up to \$500 from their FSA accounts;
- clarify the use of prescription drugs as preventive care that will not be subject to an HSA-eligible plan deductible;
- reauthorize the use of Medicaid health opportunity accounts;
- promote wellness by expanding the definition of qualified medical expenses to encourage more exercise and better diet;
- allow seniors enrolled in Medicare Part A to continue contributing to their HSAs;
- allow for the purchase of low-premium health insurance and long-term care insurance with HSA dollars.

ECFC and its members continue to reach out on behalf of their clients to urge their representatives to co-sponsor this legislation. ECFC and its membership encourage employees and employers everywhere to speak up and visit the web site www.savemyflexplan.org. It is a quick and easy way to tell your representative how important flex and pre-tax benefits are to you.

This photo is with Representative Diane Black (R-6th, TN - center with checkered jacket) with whom the group met in the Rayburn Room just off the House floor, in between House votes.