



EXECUTIVE FORUM

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Feature Article

Health Savings Accounts – Boon or Bane?

By Janice Frates

Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), created by the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003, are designed to help individuals save for future qualified medical and retiree health expenses on a tax-free basis. Just as managed care generated heated debate in its early stages, HSAs are also controversial. Supporters praise their affordability, and say they encourage users to become more cost conscious and careful health care consumers. Opponents say they are another way to shift more costs to employees, that they favor healthier employees and are likely to encourage less affluent enrollees to forego preventive services or delay seeking necessary care.

Key features of HSAs are a dedicated and highly flexible tax-free account for medical care combined with a high deductible insurance product (at least \$1,000 for an individual, \$2,000 for a family). Unspent funds can be spent in future years, or invested for use after retirement. Individuals or employers can contribute to HSAs, and the accounts are fully portable when an employee changes jobs. Account deposits are capped at \$2,650 for individuals and \$5,250 for families; individuals 55 and older can make additional “catch-up” contributions (\$600 in 2005, increasing annually by \$100 to \$1,000 in 2009 and thereafter). Out-of-pocket expenses are limited to \$5,100 or \$10,200 for families. Individuals 65+ can be reimbursed for Medicare premiums.

HSAs became available in January 2004. According to America’s Health Insurance Plans, by May 2005 enrollment had reached 1.03 million. Of these, 556,000 were individuals and 27% of these individuals were previously uninsured. Online health insurance broker eHealthInsurance reports that for the first six months of 2005, 63% of HSA purchasers paid \$100 per month or less for their plans, and that overall, premiums decreased by 15% from 2004. There was also a modest trend toward more low and moderate income people purchasing HSAs, with 43% of purchasers earning less than \$50,000 annually.

California Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi recently joined consumer and labor organizations opposing HSAs. Families USA critiques them as driven by employers’ desires to shift costs to employees, and in a 2005 Issue Brief characterize HSAs as “a radical threat to our current health insurance system.” A principal concern is that consumers, especially those with limited education or English proficiency, lack the specialized knowledge required to choose among health care options. The AFL-CIO

castigates employer cost shifting for the hardships this practice causes low wage workers, who find dependent coverage increasingly hard to afford. In a report entitled “Priced Out: Health Care in California,” Garamendi claims that HSAs put the entire health system at risk because they attract the young and healthy, leaving older and sicker people in traditional plans, and called for a universal health care system to cover all California residents and a mandate for all insurers to offer a set of comprehensive medical benefits.

To learn more about HSAs, attend the September event featuring Cora Tellez, who founded a firm that administers HSAs after a 25 year career in managed care. ☒

SAVE THE DATE

WHA SEPTEMBER EVENT

**“Behind The Scenes Of The
Health Savings Account Buzz”**
An 18-month look-back and solid projections for the future

featuring

Cora Tellez
Founder of Sterling HSA

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2005
BURBANK

Watch for email announcement or contact mtui@comcast.net for more details

WHA JUNE 2005 EVENT

Healthcare Policy: Life in the Fast Lane

By Jan Frates

Diana Bonta, RN, DrPH, recently became Vice President of Public Affairs for Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and Hospitals Southern California Region. As the former Director of the California Department of Health Services and the Long Beach Health and Human Services Department, Dr. Bonta has extensive experience both making and implementing health policy.

Her talk at the Long Beach Marriott on June 23 offered a more personal view of public health, as Dr. Bonta talked about her late mother and some of the healthcare policies that were part of her life. One of 13 children whose mother died early in her childhood, Dr. Bonta's mother and her siblings were placed in orphanages in Puerto Rico before the oldest daughter was able to bring them to live with her in New York. Surviving was the first big health challenge, but she found work and a better life in a new country like as so many immigrants have done and continue to do. Through her work as a hospital nurse's aid, she obtained health insurance for her family through the hospital labor union.

After retiring from her work in New York, Dr. Bonta's mother moved to Los Angeles and helped raise her

grandchildren while Dr. Bonta obtained her doctorate in public health and worked as a public health executive. As she grew older and more frail, she reluctantly allowed Dr. Bonta and her husband to gradually move her into their home, where she lived until her death in April 2005 at the age of 92.

Dr. Bonta noted that not all families enjoy circumstances that allow elders to spend their final years with their children. With family units growing smaller and fewer people living in extended family systems, and the Baby Boom generation approaching retirement age, the need for the safety net is greater than ever in the 21st century—and it is gone. Planning and caring for our elders is one of our great social challenges.

For public health leaders like Dr. Diana Bonta, health is “not our industry—it is our cause.” As women in health administration, she emphasized to a rapt audience, “You make a difference...in your jobs in public health departments, hospitals, hospitals, nonprofits, you are making health policy that will keep us in the fast lane of progress.” ✦

WHA is Looking for a Few Good Mentors

WHA has a longstanding commitment to the concept of mentoring, and now intends to implement a more organized project. The purpose is to facilitate connections of more experienced women (mentors) health administration professionals with less experienced WHA members (mentees) for a mutual learning experience.

Mentoring is very much a two-way street. Participants learn from and with each other, and expand their professional networks. The mentee learns from a more seasoned colleague. The mentor benefits from the opportunity to gain or refine coaching experience, knowledge of younger professional's skill set, exposure to Gen X and Y thinking and satisfaction from sharing wisdom and providing guidance.

Reflecting the time pressures that busy women health professionals face, the WHA board thought it was important to establish a time commitment up front between mentor and mentee. The general consensus was at least monthly contact, preferably for a year, with a shorter term 6 month commitment as an option.

The board also wanted to establish some criteria for par-

ticipants. Mentors may have various levels of experience, from first level manager to senior executive. We set the bar at 3 years healthcare industry experience, and will ask prospective mentors to submit a current resume, brief statement of interest and one reference. Mentees will be asked to submit a resume and career development goal statement, including how they think a mentor can help them pursue their goals.

While mentoring is most commonly one on one, group mentoring is another model if some mentors are willing to serve as mentors to more than one person. There are also more limited options, such as hosting a visit or “shadowing day,” or being willing to confer by phone with members interested in learning about a particular industry segment or company.

The first step in launching this project is to recruit potential mentors—and people to help with the matching process. Once a critical mass is formed, we'll hold a mentor orientation session and begin to recruit mentees. Contact Jan Frates, Communications Co-Chair (jefrates@adelphia.net or 949-515-0181) to be a part of this exciting new project! ✦

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT**Platinum Sponsor: Foley & Lardner LLP**

WHA's new Platinum Sponsor is a national, interdisciplinary law firm that employs an innovative industry team approach to encompass the full range of corporate legal services. Foley's health law department includes former physicians, nurses, hospital directors, plan administrators, and other health care professionals. Some attorneys have worked in federal or state government as federal prosecutors, agency counsel, and regulators. This combination allows Foley to understand the industry from both the provider and regulatory perspectives.

Foley & Lardner provides legal advice to and represents a wide range of health care clients before administrative, regulatory and legislative bodies, and has created task forces on such issues as biomedicine, physician self-referral laws, and health care fraud, waste and abuse. The firm also advises industry and government leaders on national health care policy, and has litigated precedent-setting cases involving health planning, corporate structuring, and cost-based reimbursement systems.

In August, Foley & Lardner LLP announced that its Healthcare Practice was recently recognized by *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business: 2005 Client's Guide* as one of the top in the nation for the second consecutive year. *Chambers*, a guide to law firms and attorneys across the country, is compiled by independent researchers who conducted more than 4,500 phone interviews with clients and lawyers. *Chambers* also recognized Foley & Lardner as the top Healthcare Practice in California, where the firm has offices in San Diego, Los

Angeles and Sacramento.

The Foley & Lardner website (www.foley.com) contains many helpful resources for health care professionals, including an electronic newsletter. The firm regularly publishes and disseminates white papers, articles, surveys, studies, and presentations on landmark subjects.

The firm has a longstanding commitment to the principle of *pro bono publico*: for the public good. Pro bono activities run the gamut from providing services to individuals, legal aid societies, or civil rights organizations to representing non-profit organizations in strategic projects and litigation matters. Foley is a signatory to the American Bar Association Law Firm Challenge, committing 60 hours per attorney per year on pro bono matters. A substantial portion of recent work has included immigration and asylum law as well as civil and children's rights.

Foley & Lardner also has a strong commitment to diversity. In 1998, the Foley Minority Scholarship was established to raise awareness of diversity-related issues in the legal profession. Each year, eight \$5,000 scholarships are awarded to minority students enrolled in law schools across the country.

Foley & Lardner has 239 female attorneys, of whom 72 are partners, 15% of the total in the firm, including WHA member Diane Ung (see "Member Spotlight" article). ☒

**What Members Are Reading****The Four Agreements (A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom)** by Don Miguel Ruiz

Submitted by Karen Valentine

The Four Agreements is an enlightening book about healing one self based on ancient Toltec wisdom. Thousands of years ago the Toltecs were known throughout southern Mexico as "women and men of knowledge."

The Four Agreements of the books are:

- #1 Be Impeccable with Your Word
- #2 Don't Take Anything Personally
- #3 Don't Make Assumptions
- #4 Always Do Your Best

Before explaining the four agreements, the author talked about domestication and the dream of the planet. Humans dream all the time, even before we're born. As children we were all domesticated the same way we domesticate a dog or a cat. We train them with a system of punishment and reward system. The domestication is so strong that we no longer need anyone to domesticate us because we are so well trained by our parents, the school or the church.

Our mind is a fog which the Toltec called a *mitote*. Your mind is a dream where thousands of people talk at the

same time, and nobody understands each other. Everything you believe about yourself and the world around you are all *mitote*. We can't see that we're not free.

Although we've made many agreements with ourselves and other people, if we want to live a life of joy a fulfillment we have to find the courage to break those agreements. You need a very strong will in order to adopt the Four Agreements in the book.

I found the book very spiritual and self-healing. When I first starting reading the book, I thought it was a book that went against the grain of my faith. It said we are God and we are the same as God. I didn't agree with everything written, but there were many take-aways I will adopt. It's not about religion as much as it is about a code of conduct. For instance, I personally have a problem with taking things personally. I have made this following agreement a kind of a daily mantra now: "I will not take things personally." ☒

Read a good book recently that you'd like to share with your colleagues in WHA?

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**Diane Ung, JD, Partner, Foley & Lardner LLP***By Janice Frates*

Diane Ung is a member of the Health Law Department of this distinguished national law firm. Her practice focuses on federal and state health care legislation and payment issues arising under Medicare, Medicaid and other government programs.

Diane's clients are primarily public agencies and include county health departments and managed care organizations, public hospitals and large publicly operated teaching hospitals. Among her key accomplishments are:

- Helped clients evaluate and develop demonstration projects that implement innovative programs for Medicaid beneficiaries;
- Drafted Medicaid program legislation involving disproportionate share hospital (DSH) payment systems;
- Advised clients regarding Medicaid program audits conducted by the DHHS Office of the Inspector General;
- Counseled clients regarding the restructuring of public health agencies and the evaluation of public/private partnerships, including the transfer of a public hospital to a nonprofit entity.
- Advised clients on matters involving federally qualified health centers and the 340B drug pricing program for community health centers; and
- Regularly contributes to *Drug Benefits Trend* magazine.

Diane is a graduate of Loyola Law School; the UCLA School of Public Health, where she specialized in health planning and policy analysis; and Pomona College. She is a member of the bar in both California and the District of Columbia.

Prior to beginning her legal career, Diane spent five years in facility health planning and health services research for Kaiser Permanente, where she first became involved in WHA. She is a member of the Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association and the American Public Health Association, and serves on the executive committee of the Health Law Section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. "I really enjoy WHA as a stress free networking environment, and appreciate the personal involvement that WHA creates for people."

Diane enjoys both the work and the people at Foley &



Lardner. The women partners have formed a networking group to address women's issues within the firm and were instrumental in shaping the firm's policies on family leave and flexible work schedules. Among the firm's numerous affinity groups is one for working parents.

In her (admittedly limited) spare time, Diane and her husband enjoy traveling to places where they can photograph exotic animals such as a photo safari to Africa and, most recently, to capture polar bears in Canada on film. She is also the newest WHA Board Member, serving as Membership Chair for the rest of 2005. ❖

Executive Forum is published four times a year by Women In Health Administration of Southern California. We welcome your comments, suggestions and article submissions. Please contact:

Editor:
Nina Niu-Ok
(818) 368-4917
nina@theoks.com

WHA would love to hear from you! Please let us know of any important news in your lives, ideas for events and activities, book reviews, articles, etc. Better yet, get involved and lend your talent and ideas by joining one of the WHA committees!

FIRESIDE CHAT

Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office

by Simrahn Sahny

WHA's May 22nd Fireside Chat was an intimate workshop hosted at the home of Finance Chair Doria Hai over an engaging afternoon tea. Motivated attendees got a chance to share their experiences and hear from well regarded guest speakers – Dr. Trudi Carter and Marlene Woodworth--as they discussed feminine mannerisms that sabotage women's careers. Dr. Trudi Carter is the Chief Medical Officer at the CHOC Health Alliance. She has also been a physician executive for hospital systems and physician practice management companies. Marlene Woodworth, an experienced CEO for various hospitals and organizations, coaches CEO's on developing their organizations, their boards, and their internal audiences. The foundation for the discussion was the latest national bestseller book, *Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office: 101 Unconscious Mistakes Women Make That Sabotage Their Careers* by Lois Frankel.

Dr. Carter and Ms. Woodworth both recommended reading the book to identify behaviors that women learn in girlhood that could potentially be interfering with their career mobility. Dr. Carter began the discussion with the preface that the most important step in planning your career is to know what you want; the corner office is not necessarily for everyone. In order to empower yourself, Dr. Carter mentioned that it is important to utilize your strengths and identify your mistakes.

Considering that senior management in the healthcare industry is male-dominated, Dr. Carter emphasized that it is important for women to draw the line and not take any action they are not comfortable with only because they are being compelled by management. She shared an anecdote where she was pressured to "cook the books" by

senior executives of the firm but she took a stance and refused to partake in unethical behavior. Although it was hard at the time to stand up to the executives, the experience was an empowering one that made her a stronger person.

Ms. Woodworth structured her discussion around mistakes she most often recognizes among women, including herself, in the workplace, the reason behind these unconscious mistakes, and suggestions on how to remedy them. She pointed out some common behaviors that male counterparts in the workplace have mastered but women still need to work on. Some examples are working without a break while male colleagues take time to socialize with other colleagues, and not speaking up at meetings unless they are 100 percent sure about the point, while male colleagues will speak up with confidence given little information.

Ms. Woodworth suggested that these behaviors in women could be due to lack of participation in competitive sports while growing up, or the belief that girls are to be seen and not heard. In order to be noticed and not be passed up for promotions, etc. she emphasized the importance of branding yourself, which includes defining your brand, acknowledging the value of your brand, and developing a plan for marketing your brand.

WHA thanks our two speakers for sharing their time and experiences, and our hostess for opening up her home, making the Fireside Chat a resounding success! ✨

Congratulations to WHA Member Karen Valentine!

Congratulations to Event Committee Co-Chair Karen Valentine, Senior Business Development Specialist at Wellpoint, Inc. on being selected as a Fellow for America's Health Insurance Plan Foundation's Minority Management Development Program, a highly competitive and rigorous professional development experience.

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MEMBERS ON THE MOVE & NEW MEMBERS**New Members:****Sasha Aggarwal** is a Health Connect Trainer at Kaiser Permanente.**Shay Beider, MPH** is an Executive Director at Integrative Touch for Kids.**Melissa Biel** is a new member.**Gretchen Brown** is COO at CalOptima.**Helen Carlson, MBA, PhD** is President of Carlson Consulting.**Cassie Cone** is a Senior Consultant at Cap Gemini.**Grace Crofton** is a Director Administrative Quality at Universal Care.**Kim Dickinson, MD, MPH** works at San Gabriel Valley Pathology Consultants.**Ellen Garner** is a Marketing Director for RSI Consulting Services, Inc.**Ruthie Goldberg** is an Administrative Fellow at Southern California Permanente Medical Group (Kaiser).**Kate Kingsley** is President of KLKingsley Executive Search.**Theresa J. Marino** is a Manager in the Bureau of Public Health with the City of Long Beach.**Anjali Misra** works in General Internal Medicine/Health Services Research at UCLA**Amy Nespor** is a new member.**Dayna Nicholson** is an Attorney at Fulbright & Jaworski.**Amy Park** is Chief Financial Officer at CalOptima.**Zan Dubin Scott** is a new member.**Members on the Move:****Melissa Blaser** is Administrative Coordinator at Act-1 On-Site Amgen.**Debby Chanen** is Senior Director, Managed Care and Network Development at Adventist Health Managed Care.**Colleen Nevins** is in Clinical Nursing at Livingston Memorial VNA.**Attention Members:
Get a Colleague to Join WHA!**

Current WHA members will receive a **\$15.00 coupon** if they encourage a colleague to join WHA. The coupon can be applied toward the next WHA event or membership renewal.

The colleague will be able to join at \$60 through her WHA reference.

Contact mtui@comcast.net for more details!



P.O.Box 77932
Corona, CA 92877-0131

**Other Events
(non-WHA)**September 25-27, 2005

HFMA Northern and Southern CA Chapters

15th Annual Conference on Managed Care*"Riding the Waves of Change in Managed Health Care"*

Location: Orange County, CA

www.hfma-mgdcare.orgOctober 17, 2005

Health Care Executives of Southern California

"Skillful Negotiating: Applications to Managed Care Contracting"

Location: Santa Barbara, CA

www.hcesocal.org