
NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA CHAPTER-ISCEBS



Quarterly e-Newsletter ▪ April 2008

Welcome...

My name is Janine Keehan and I'm the new chairperson for the ISCEBS New York Metro chapter quarterly newsletter. I'm very excited about my new position. For my first edition of this newsletter, I have added an article called, "Ask a Colleague." If there are any suggestions you have for the newsletter or information you would like to see in this newsletter going forward, please call me at (212) 782-1091 or e-mail me at janine.keehan@bertelsmann.com.

Also, don't forget to sign up for the New York Metro Chapter of ISCEBS April 16th meeting on "Summary Plan Descriptions (SPD) – Do You Really Have One?" Employers are often confident that they are complying with the ERISA Welfare SPD requirements-but they aren't! After all, they have received and distributed copies of the booklets provided by their carriers. However, most carrier provided documents are deficient. The potential liabilities for non-compliance are significant. Specific information is required for employee communication materials to satisfy the ERISA definition of a Summary Plan Description. Come hear about the steps you can take to ensure you are meeting ERISA notice and disclosure requirements. Also, discover how easy it is to create a Plan Document and how to prepare for a DOL audit. If you would like more information regarding registering for this meeting, you may do so by sending an e-mail to: Silent@worldnet.att.net

IN THIS ISSUE...

Welcome	1
ISCEBS Online Community	2
First Quarter 2008 in Review	2
NEW FEATURE: Ask a Colleague.....	3
Congratulations Are in Order	3
In Memoriam	3

Keep Up to Date: ISCEBS Online Community

Search for members and make new connections with the Online Community. Membership is exclusive and free to members only. All you need to do to take advantage of all the community has to offer is to proceed through the registration process to establish a User ID and password.

www.iscebs.org

Select "ISCEBS Online Community"

First time users: Proceed to registration and establish user ID and password

Enter "Last Name", CEBS

Enter First Name or Initial

Click on "Find My Name"

Visiting the Community again? Select a feature and enter user ID and password

To update your profile:

Click on View/Update Your Online Directory Listing

Update information

Click to update

To find an individual:

Click on "Simple Search"

Enter "Name"

Click on "Search"

To obtain a chapter listing:

Click on "Advanced Search"

Chapter Affiliation: Select "New York Metro"

Click on "Search"

Questions or comments about the site:

E-mail iscebs@iscebs.org

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1st Quarter 2008 In Review...

JANUARY 24TH

On January 24, 2008, the New York Metro Chapter of CEBS hosted a *Wellness* seminar. The presenter was, **Rick Maher from USI Insurance Services LLC**, and a lively discussion ensued. We learned that wellness is risk management for medical costs. The presenter stated that prevention is not the same as early detection. The focus of employers should be on risk reduction by using a fine-tuned wellness program. Ways to apply the risk reduction model is to have Health coaches in the office and consistent wellness messaging. Some companies argue that it's difficult to measure return on investment for a wellness plan but some suggestions are to measure excess health and welfare claims, economic impact, productivity of labor force and presenteeism.

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FEBRUARY 12TH

On February 12, 2008 the NY Metro Chapter had a seminar on *Dependent Eligibility Audits*. At the seminar, we found out that the results of a comprehensive dependent eligibility audit can indicate a compelling opportunity to enhance the internal controls utilized in benefit's enrollment. A dependent eligibility audit may provide immediate savings for employer sponsored health plan(s) and their employees.

While dependent eligibility audits are not a new phenomenon, they are certainly more common today than at any time in the past. "When was the last time employers had an opportunity to save money on their health plan(s) and not reduce benefits or increase employee payroll deductions," said **Brennan Clipp, SR VP of Sales and Marketing for HRAdvance**, a leading provider of dependent eligibility audit and verification services. "Our client's audit results are averaging more than 12% ineligible and that can add up to millions of dollars spent annually on ineligible expenses."

Times are changing and most employers have

emphasized convenience and expediency in enrollment processes, relying solely on an attestation from the employees to evidence dependent relationships. Benefits' professionals constantly struggle to contain costs in today's labor market, and fiduciaries face a new kind of challenge and potential liability covering ineligible participants on their health plan(s). The message is clear: employers should closely evaluate internal controls, the cost-benefit relationship of their current enrollment processes and the tax implications of pre-tax premiums attributable to ineligible dependents.

For those considering a dependent eligibility audit, you may contact the following for more information:

Chris Gada

Northeast Regional VP,
HRAdvance | Hosted Human Resource Solutions
726 Rt 202 South, Suite 320-319
Bridgewater, NJ 08807
Tel: 908.450.9939 Cell: 908.400.5528
cgada@HRAdvance.com

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MARCH 25TH

On March 25th, **Bob Mindel** presented *Mercer's 2007 National Health Plan Survey Results for Mid-Size Employers*. Growth in healthcare benefit cost per employee has stabilized. Cost rose 6.1% in 2007 and is predicted to rise by a lesser amount in 2008. The bad news is that's still more than twice the rate of inflation. Health cost growth is outpacing wages and materials costs and eroding business profitability. Still, cost increases aren't accelerating either, which suggests that employers' long-range cost management strategies – consumerism and care management – are working. Mercer's survey included private and public employers with 10 or more employees. Nearly 3,000 employers participated in 2007. If you are interested in purchasing a copy of Mercer's National Survey of Employer-Sponsored Health Plan 2007, you may call Mercer at 212-345-2451.

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Want a new job? Why not look on the International Foundation of Employee Benefits website at:
<http://www.ifebp.org/Resources/Jobs+and+Resumes/Jobs/default.htm>

Need to fill a position? Why not post it on the International Foundation of Employee Benefits website at:
<http://www.ifebp.org/Resources/Jobs+and+Resumes/Jobs/How+to+Post+an+Ad/>

Ask a Colleague

by Janine Keehan

For the first edition of "Ask a Colleague," I chose to interview **Sue Fegan, Vice President of Corporate Benefits at Bertelsmann, Inc.** Bertelsmann is a U.S. Holding company for a German Media conglomerate. Bertelsmann owns 10 different operating companies: Random House, Book, CD and DVD of the Month club, FremantleMedia (producer of American Idol), 50% joint venture with SONY for SONY BMG Music, as well as various printing companies.

I've chosen to interview Sue because she has served 20 years in total with the national and local level of ISCEBS. She received her CEBS designation in 1982. Sue was a charter member of the International Society of CEBS for the New England Chapter and was President of the Chapter. Sue worked on the Symposium planning committee for three years as well as spoke at three Symposiums. She sat on the CEBS committee and the Corporate Board of the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans. She served on the Board for a total of seven years; two of her years on the Board were as Chair. Sue is known in the CEBS community for being innovative and always on the cutting edge of the benefits field.

1. Q: What made you choose a profession in the Benefits field?
A: I didn't choose the field; it chose me. I think this is true for most benefits people.
2. Q: What do you like about the field?
A: I like that I never have the same day twice. The field is always growing and changing. I also enjoy the mix of technical knowledge and people skills.
3. Q: What made you choose to receive your CEBS designation?
A: I was working as a pension underwriter for Travelers. Travelers encouraged education. I could receive my CLU or CEBS. CEBS was more appealing to me.
4. Q: How has having a CEBS designation helped you in your career path?
A: My CEBS designation has allowed me to move from the insurance industry, to the consulting industry and finally to the corporate side of benefits as a VP. I know that having my CEBS designation was the only way to prove that I have knowledge beyond the scope of my job. Also, I've met many people through the foundation and society, which helps me stay current with the field.
5. Q: Is there any advice you would give to someone entering the benefits field now?
A: I would suggest anyone new to the field get their CEBS designation and continue to become educated in the field. It is also important to network with your peers whenever you have the opportunity.
6. Q: What do you think is the most pressing issue in benefits today?
A: The most pressing issue today is that the benefits field is overly regulated as well as

complex. We have an employment based benefits system on which more and more layers and costs are being added, without any benefit to the employees.

7. Q: What would you like to see happen in the benefits field?

A: I would like there to be more focus on benefits themselves and less on regulations.

If you or someone you know would like to be interviewed for the ISCEBS New York Metro Chapter, please contact **Janine Keehan** at:

212-782-1091 or janine.keehan@bertelsmann.com

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congratulations Are in Order

Recent Grads

DAVID C. AVELLANET, CEBS

Account Executive - Diversified Investment Advisors
Purchase, New York

GERI M. DISTEFANO, CEBS

Benefits Manager - Atlas Air Inc.
Purchase, New York

ERIKA A. KIRCHNER, CEBS

Manager, Corporate Benefits - Bertelsmann, Inc.
New York, New York

DON F. SANTOS, CEBS

TIAA-CREF
New York, New York

DOROTHY R. WALLACE, CEBS

Account Manager - Hartford Life Insurance
New York, New York

Members on the Move

AMIT B. MOHINDRA, CEBS

Associate Partner - IBM Global Business Services
New York, New York

In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we report the recent loss of one of our long time chapter members, **Christine Jastrzemski, CEBS**. Chris graduated from Hofstra University, earned her CEBS Designation in 1990 and was also a past Fellow of the International Society. For the last 11 years, Chris worked for the New York Times Co. and was Senior Manager of Corporate Benefits at the time of her passing; she is survived by her husband, Jeff, son and daughter-in-law Michael and Nicole, and her son Matthew.

