

# REVIEW OF CURRENT LITERATURE

## **Colombia's Universal Health Insurance System**

Since 1993, Colombia has had a universal health care scheme that insures more than 80% of the country's population. Data from Colombia's 1995 and 2005 *Demographic and Health Surveys* and the 2003 *Living Standards Measurement Survey* have allowed analysts to evaluate the impact of universal health insurance. Analysis finds that access has improved for all health services and the incidence of catastrophic health spending has gone down. These trends are even more noticeable among disadvantaged groups such as the poor and those in rural areas.

Ursula Giedion and Manuela Villar Uribe.  
*Health Affairs*,  
May-June 2009, pp. 853-863.  
#0156406

## **Getting it Right in Reductions in Force: How to Minimize Legal Risks**

Employers contemplating a reduction in force (RIF) should first attempt to avoid the action by considering all alternative cost-cutting possibilities, including voluntary exit programs. Every decision should be documented at every step of the process. If proceeding with an RIF, employers must comply with the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act and union contract obligations. With the risk of age discrimination claims, employers should prepare waiver and release forms. Human Resources should work with managers to develop and document a process of evaluating, selecting and then personally informing those to be released. Decisions must be made about offering outplacement services to some and redeployment opportunities to others.

Alison B. Marshall and Julie M. Broas.  
*Employee Benefit Plan Review*,  
May 2009, pp. 18-25.  
#0156464

## **Health and Productivity Management Programs Provide Savings Spark to Employers**

Many Walt Disney Co. employees benefit from the Right Fit occupational health and safety program. The program has used function-based testing to reduce musculoskeletal injury claims for covered positions by 8%, decreasing lost work days by 23%. Auto industry supplier Delphi implemented a comprehensive leave management, employee safety and efficiency improvement software package that has saved the company nearly \$9.7 million in less than 2.5 years. Both Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. and Vectren Corp. have on-site clinics to cut health care costs. Goodyear's clinic saves nearly \$2 million a year, while Vectren saves 62% on doctor visits, 49% on prescription drugs and 59% on laboratory costs.

Bruce Shutan.  
*Employee Benefit News*,  
May 2009, pp. 46-48.  
#0156458

### **Employee Benefits Bookshelf**

These abstracts of current books were selected by Patricia A. Bonner, Associate Director, Publications—Books, International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans. They were drawn from the EMPLOYEE BENEFITS INFOSOURCE™ database developed by the International Foundation's Information Center. Most are available at [www.ifebp.org/bookstore](http://www.ifebp.org/bookstore) or by calling (888) 334-3327, option 4. They may also be ordered by contacting the publishers directly or checking with a local bookstore about special orders.

### **Legal Requirements Upon Termination**

Employers' requirements to employees being terminated vary depending on whether the separation is voluntary or not. Many states require the final pay check to be provided nearly immediately in an involuntary separation. States and employer policies vary in whether vacation or sick time must be included, but commissions must be included in all cases. Employers must also provide COBRA notification. For voluntary separations, employers must abide by regulations of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act and the Older Workers Benefit Protection Act. When there is concern about liability for any claim, the employer may offer a settlement in exchange for a waiver of claims. Terms of the agreement must refer to specific laws, and be understandable, legal and enforceable.

Jessica L. Roe and S. Chad Cardon.  
*Compensation and Benefits Review*,  
May-June 2009, pp. 61-67.  
#0156440

### **Off the Clock and on the Hook: A Primer on Employer Liability for the Acts of Employees Committed Away From Work**

While employers are accountable for employees' work-related actions, liability usually does not extend to actions during employees' lunch breaks and coming and going from workplaces. Under the doctrine of respondeat superior, the employer is generally responsible for injuries caused by an employee if they occur in connection with work, done at the employer's bidding or as part of normal job duties. Some courts exclude injuries occurring during break or travel time for which the employee is compensated, in situations involving an employee's personal comfort and requiring use of a certain vehicle. An employer may be held responsible for an accident if the employee's activity provides an incidental benefit to the employer and is beyond the worker's routine commute.

Robert M. Forni Jr.  
*Employee Relations Law Journal*,  
Summer 2009, pp. 67-85.  
#0156428

### **The Role of Incentive Design, Incentive Value, Communications Strategy, and Worksite Culture on Health Risk Assessment Participation**

Researchers examined how various factors influenced health plan members' participation in health risk assessments. The study of 559,998 employees at 36 organizations showed monetary incentives to be the most powerful variable, with their influence rising with their cash value. Plans with incentives integrated into plan design had 6% higher participation and tended to offer higher incentive cash values. Strength of communications was also a significant factor in participation, followed by worksite wellness culture.

Erin L. D. Seaverson, Jessica Grossmeier,  
Toni M. Miller and David R. Anderson.  
*American Journal of Health Promotion*,  
May-June 2009, pp. 343-352.  
#0156442

### **A Shared Benefit: Employer Views on the Value of 401(k) Plans**

According to a 2008 survey by Charles Schwab and CFO Publishing Corp., senior financial executives accept a high level of responsibility for employees' retirement income planning. The polled executives recognize the value of 401(k) plans as much as employees, and see automatic enrollment and diversified investment options as keys for success. Yet 60% of respondents say their firms fall short on providing support through financial literacy education. The economic crisis presents a valuable opportunity for employers to reinforce the importance of investment education and advice. Yet employees must also accept responsibility by taking in and acting on advice for retirement income planning.

David W. Owens.  
*Defined Contribution Insights*,  
May-June 2009, pp. 4-7.  
#0156470

Copyright of *Benefits Quarterly* is the property of International Society of Certified Employee Benefit Specialists and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.