

Benefit Briefs!



We are the company that insurance agents do not want you, or your colleagues, to know about!

12/21/14

Our Year End Edition - What Did You Overlook? See Checklist

Our traditional year-end issue of Benefit Briefs! is jammed packed with a host of employee benefit issues that you may have overlooked, forgot about, placed on your tomorrow list, etc. that is designed for a rapid read with links to articles that you can research further.

Industry Leaders Interviews

The most powerful woman in health care - [read this](#).

Aetna CEO Mark Bertolini outlines "[creative destruction](#)" of healthcare.

Affordable Care Act Updates

Despite all the problems that ObamaCare had last year with the roll-out of its healthcare.gov website; delays for employers with 50 to 99 employees; complex regulations; etc. our reading of the "tea leaves" is that President Obama will not be issuing any further delays to the implementation of the law as well as the "play or pay" penalties. The 2 main reasons are that most of the regulations that we have been waiting for our out now and are being implemented. Secondly, and probably more

About
Bushnell & Company

We are NOT insurance agents or brokers! Since we are a professional fee based consulting firm, our income is transparent and is not tied to high or undisclosed commissions, incentives, trips, etc. from the sale of insurance products.

As the architects of employee benefit plans, we specialize in consulting with leaders and managers of organizations regarding the design, administration, funding and communication of high quality, cost effective and administratively efficient employee benefit plans.

These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- * Medical
- * Dental
- * Disability - Short & Long
- * Life Insurance
- * Long Term Care
- * Retirement
Plans including Defined Benefit Pension, Money Purchase, Profit Sharing, ESOP, 401(k), 403(b), & 457
- * Flexible Benefits or Sec. 125 Cafeteria Plans
- * Transit & Parking
- * Executive Deferred Compensation
- * Retiree Benefits - Medical, Dental, Rx, Medicare coordination of Benefits

important, is it the House of Representatives is suing the President on the delay, via Executive Order of the 50 to 99 employee delay for overstepping his bounds and changing the law without congressional approval. **Therefore, in our opinion, we are not likely to see any further delays in implementing the Affordable Care Act.**

- Great [survey](#) on what employers are doing in response to ACA impact.
- US Supreme Court to hear health care [subsidies](#) case over 4 words "established by the state." This could have huge implications on ObamaCare.
- Healthcare [enrollment](#) off by 400,000 - counted dental participants as medical plan participants???
- Minimum Value Plans (MVPs) ruled [illegal](#) by IRS. How did anyone ever think that a medical plan that did not cover hospital costs met 60% MEC threshold?
- [Oregon](#) abandons its state health care exchange after spending \$134MM - was going to cost another \$78MM to fix - switch to federal HIX cost \$6MM. [Maryland](#) adopts Connecticut exchange.
- US Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor stopped [birth control](#) mandate in 2014.
- Can an employer use [individual policies](#) and pay the premiums on a pre-tax basis to fund their employee benefit plan? For the 3rd time no! See DOL FAQ.
- We assume that you have been reading about **Jonathan Gruber**, the economics professor at MIT and one of the principal architects of ObamaCare and all these videos that have surfaced of late - look up on Google. The most famous one was calling the American people "stupid" and that is why they packaged ObamaCare is complex as they did. Congress took him to the [woodshed](#) recently, and even the states where he had been consulting, are now starting to question his healthcare modeling. There is an interesting article dealing with [Vermont](#) and its woes.

We pride ourselves in providing professional services with a value in excess of our fees . . . often by a very wide margin.

Those services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- \$ Independent 2nd opinion review and advisory services
- \$ Review and analysis of insurance company contracts and proposals.
- \$ Prepare RFI / RFP / RFP specifications and do analysis for vendor selection.
- \$ Manage annual insurance / vendor renewal process.
- \$ Financing vehicle analysis, including appropriateness of managed care, HMO, HRA, FSA, HSA in insured plan, self-funding and self - insurance.
- \$ Actuarial and administrative consulting services for retirement as well as health and welfare benefit plans.
- \$ Online enrollment and administration.
- \$ Communication of employee benefit plans.
- \$ Comprehensive / total reward benefit statements.
- \$ Focus group studies
- \$ ERISA / COBRA / HIPAA compliance audits
- \$ Expert witness consultation

Other Employee Benefit Issues

- Workers out-of-pocket health costs [have doubled](#) in last 5 years.
- Projected cost [trends](#) from 2014 to 2015
- It would be worth your time to read about the [concussion](#) settlement with the NFL.

Medicaid & Medicare

Doctors are facing steep [cuts](#) in Medicaid reimbursement fees.

Wellness

Read this fascinating article on the [Power of Sleep](#) for your health.

Bushnell & Company

Tooting our horn a little bit, we had some significant accomplishments in 2014.

- For the 3rd year in a row, we were listed in the top 10 of employee benefit firms in Central Texas (only one that is fee-based) by the Austin Business Journal.
- We launched our updated and refreshed website on December 10 works better on tablets and smart phones - check us out at [BushnellCompany.com](#)
- Jim Bushnell earned his Fellowship designation through 2016, from the International Society of Certified Employee Benefit Specialist after completing a rigorous national exam covering both health & welfare and retirement benefits.
- **A tradition that we have adopted at our firm since 1991, and are continuing again this year, is that in lieu of a fancy party, greeting cards, gifts, etc., we are making a substantial contribution to two local charities. The beneficiaries this year are**



the Austin Boys & Girls Club Foundation
and the Rotary Club of Austin Foundation.

Year End Checklist

Finally, for the dessert to this newsletter, our friends at Alston & Bird in Atlanta have again shared with us their 2014 year-end [checklist](#) - it is a must read for any employee benefits professional, manager, executive, and those associated with employee benefits.

**We want to wish everyone
a blessed Holiday Season
and Happy New Year!**

**Our clients have discovered the right answers pay for
themselves!©**

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