

From: Jim Klein

Subject: MEMO TO MEMBERS: New Developments on COVID-19 Coronavirus Outbreak



AMERICAN BENEFITS --- COUNCIL

COUNCIL UPDATE MEMO TO MEMBERS

March 11, 2020

To: American Benefits Council Members

From: James Klein, Council President

Re: New Developments on COVID-19 Coronavirus Outbreak

Dear Council members,

To help keep you connected to fast-changing COVID-19 developments, we have established a central page on the American Benefits Council website where we will post updates and resources for companies managing their benefit plans to keep employees

safe and healthy. You can find the site via our home page or at the following URL: <http://www.americanbenefitscouncil.org/virus>.

Additional updates:

- We are very pleased to report that this morning the U.S. Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued [Notice 2020-15](#), guidance clarifying that the provision of all medical care services received, and items purchased, associated with testing for, and treatment of, COVID-19 will not disqualify a health plan from being linked with a health savings account. (A summary of the guidance will be provided in a forthcoming *Benefits Byte*.)
- As you know, the Council has had ongoing communication on this matter with the federal agencies the past couple weeks. [Linked here is our March 10 letter](#) formally requesting the guidance we have been urging the agencies to provide. Many thanks to all our members with whom we have discussed this issue. It was extremely helpful to us in making the case to the agencies to act quickly.
- Shortly after the IRS notice was issued, the Council issued [a public statement](#) asserting that the guidance "gives companies the assurance they needed to ensure that screening can be provided at no cost to covered beneficiaries" and expressing appreciation for the rapid response from the agencies.
- As a follow-up to the [membership-wide survey](#) conducted two weeks ago, focused on companies' global travel and operations, the Council has sent out a more comprehensive follow-up survey to one member at each plan sponsor company. It covers, health, retirement, paid leave and general information matters concerning implications of, and responses to, COVID-19. Given the strong interest among members for information, the deadline for completing this survey is very short – **noon on Friday, March 13** – so we encourage members to complete the survey promptly.

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