

The VB Solutions Report

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Breast cancer is the most diagnosed cancer in American women. The American Cancer Society estimates that 182,460 women will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in 2008. Breast cancer can also occur in men – an estimated 1,990 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008. An estimated 40,930 people will die from this disease in 2008. October has been designated Breast Cancer Awareness Month to encourage early detection and awareness of breast cancer. ♦



The best way to find breast cancer early is by performing a breast self exam (BSE) each month. View a video on www.komen.org or the diagram on www.breastcancer.org for more assistance on how to correctly perform a BSE.

Did you know...?

The costs surrounding a cancer diagnosis average \$146,000 per patient. Direct costs include deductibles, copays, out-of-network costs and indirect costs include lost work time, transportation, lifestyle changes. A cancer/critical illness policy from VBS can help meet mortgage payments, personal debt and increased financial responsibilities. Additionally, the benefits can be used to help access top medical professionals, pay for alternative treatments and for out-of-state travel. Contact VBS today for more information.

Understanding High Deductible Health Plans and Health Savings Accounts

Healthcare costs in the U.S. continue to rise after a decade of unexpected growth. Hoping to encourage a turnaround, many employers are quickly turning to a new trend in employee healthcare benefits: consumer-driven health plans. The purpose of these plans is to educate employees concerning

the true costs of medical services and to hold employees more responsible for their medical care purchase decisions. Though the employee takes the reins with these plans, consumer-driven healthcare is still sponsored by the employer.

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- www.vbsct.com
New website for link and contact information

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Understanding High Deductible Health Plans and Health Savings Accounts

"Coupling your high deductible plan with a voluntary hospital indemnity program is another option that can ease the pain for employees as they struggle with rising out-of-pocket expenses"

These new plans require patients to be more informed and eventually more financially responsible for the real costs of healthcare services. Employers offering these plans hope that employees will use healthcare services more efficiently, which should eventually lessen the demand and cost of healthcare over time.

The IRS defines the terms of the high deductible plan. In 2009, an IRS recognized high deductible health plan will have a minimum individual deductible of \$1,150 and \$2,300 for a family. Coupled with a Health Savings Account, employees can save money for unforeseen medical expenses or save tax deferred dollars for retiree medical costs. Although these plans appear to be a win-win for both the employer and the employee, often the introduction of a high deductible is met with

resistance, fear and misunderstanding ~ even with the best communication plan!

VBS can help you reduce the fear and the confusion. With **HSA CONSULT**, we will not only communicate and thoroughly explain these plans, we will actually meet one on one with your employees and walk them through enrollment.

Coupling your high deductible plan with a voluntary hospital indemnity program is another option that can ease the pain for employees as they struggle with rising out-of-pocket expenses. These plans pay an indemnity benefit when hospitalized. That benefit payment can be used to offset high deductibles.

Contact VBS today for more information. ♦

A Word about Your Future

All across the country, American's are worried. With the financial markets teetering on the brink of bankruptcy and the stock market reacting negatively to this upheaval, it is no wonder American's are circling the wagons around their retirement accounts. Many financial analysts think we are heading for a long period of below average returns. If this is the case, it is more important than ever to save as much as you can for retirement. It is essential to monitor your retirement investments. When was the last time you gave your 401(k) a tune up? Now is the time to fine tune your portfolio. The number one way to maximize your 401(k) in an economic downturn is to take advantage of an employer's matching dollars. One-third of

investors fail to invest enough to take advantage of the full employer match. Can you really afford to leave money on the table? Most financial analysts will tell you to invest less than 10% of your total investment in a single company stock, including your employers. Look into the fees of any mutual fund investments. When these funds are earning 20%, it is easy to ignore the fees. But when earning slip to 3 or 4%, a 1% fee is huge. Review life-cycle funds to diversify your portfolio. These funds invest in a mix of stocks, bonds and money funds based on a target retirement date. **Contact VBS today for more information on the best course of action for you and your money during these troubling times. ♦**



What's New?



Voluntary Benefit Solutions, through our affiliation with Allstate Insurance, is pleased to announce Benefits Selection, benefits enrollment system. **Benefits Selection is an internet based platform that provides comprehensive benefits enrollment solutions.** To access Benefits Selection, employers must offer at least two Allstate products in the workplace. Allstate is a top rated player in the voluntary benefits marketplace, offering products such as: life insurance, disability insurance, cancer and critical illness insurance, hospital indemnity and accident insurance. When you offer two or more Allstate products, you receive access to Benefits Selection at no additional cost. This online enrollment platform will not only enroll employees in the Allstate products, but is also equipped to enroll your medical, dental, vision,

ancillary lines, 401(k) and Flexible Spending Accounts.

Be "in good hands" with Allstate and VBS.

Contact VBS today for more information on Benefits Selection. ♦



VBS Mission Statement

To lead the voluntary benefit marketplace with innovative ideas and products. To deliver a great value to our clients by remaining customer focused.

Voluntary Benefit Solutions Launches New Website!

New look, new vibe, new website!! We are pleased to launch our new site. Logon to www.vbsct.com, to view the Voluntary Benefit Solutions brand new website. Learn about our products and services, our staff and our commitment. Also, you can find contact information and testimonials. We stand by our mission and our commitment to the voluntary marketplace, as well as our commitment to you.

www.vbsct.com