

CCM e-News Brief

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[Compliments of Charlotte Bishop, President, Creative Case Management, Inc.]

Chewing the Fat With levels of obesity and its health-related impacts continuing to rise in the U.S., employers are facing a fast-growing threat to productivity and employee health. Humana Inc., one of the nation's leading health and well-being companies, and Weight Watchers International, Inc., the world's leading provider of weight management services, announced today that they have teamed up to help employers attack the problem. All Humana members in qualified employer-sponsored health plans now have free and discounted access to Weight Watchers through an integrated wellness program built into their health plan, giving Humana members a proven and accessible approach to change their habits and improve their health. The first-of-its-kind program closely integrates Weight Watchers into Humana's many medical and wellness programs, actively connecting members who want to lose weight to the program at no cost for six months, and at a significant discount thereafter. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Guidelines support intensive, multicomponent behavioral interventions, including community-based programs, as effective for obesity treatment. As a behavioral intervention, Weight Watchers helps people to adopt a healthier lifestyle that results in achieving and learning to maintain a healthy weight.

<http://www.workerscompensation.com/compnewsnetwork/news/20798-humana-and-weight-watchers-join-forces-to-help-employers-tackle-obesity.html>

Better Communication. The Social Security Administration (SSA) has been vocal in the past about its difficulty in obtaining information about workers' compensation benefits. The primary reason that the SSA has been seeking this information is to reduce social security benefits by way of an SSDI/WC offset. The SSDI/WC offset is a calculation used by the SSA to reduce a beneficiary's SSDI benefit amount if the person is also receiving workers' compensation benefits. The SSDI/WC offset is different in every state and applies only when the individual's combined monthly amounts of SSDI and workers' compensation are greater than 80% of individual's pre-disability "average current earnings."

The SSA currently has to rely on beneficiaries to report to the SSA when they receive workers' compensation or public disability benefits. President Obama's 2016 budget proposal includes a provision to establish a new federal requirement that workers' compensation and public disability benefit information be provided by states, local governments, and private insurers to the SSA. The proposal can be found here: <http://www.ssa.gov/budget/FY16Files/2016BO.pdf> (the workers' compensation reporting proposal can be found on page 22, section 10 of the document). In summary, ultimately the proposal's objective is to have states, local governments and insurers report SSDI beneficiaries to the SSA so that it can use the SSDI offset in more cases and ultimately preserve the fiscal integrity of the Social Security program. Ultimately, the SSA and Medicare have the same end goal, which is saving money and preserving their respective SSA and Medicare programs. Helios would hope that if this SSA reporting proposal becomes a reality that the SSA and Medicare would solidify these efforts into a single reporting solution/requirement since the SSA and Medicare will often be receiving duplicative data.

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