



NEW HAMPSHIRE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATION

Stephen F. Tacopina, President 2003-2005

*Department of Veterans Affairs
VA Medical Center
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FEA Board Meeting
February 15, 2005

The meeting convened at 10:00 AM. at the VA Medical Center, Manchester New Hampshire.

NH. The following members were present:

Stephen Tacopina, VA
Marlene Littlefield, NPC
Charles Badger, NPC
Peter Kawonczyk, USA
Kathi Hatch, IRS
Pat Riordan, PNSY
Bob Short, PNS
Armand Carignan, FAA
Rose O'Hare, OSHA

I. Stephen F. Tacopina called the meeting to order at 10:00. The Minutes from the January 2005 meeting were not available.

II. Bob Short, Treasurer, reported no significant changes in the treasury report this month. The organization has \$193.46 in the checking account and \$13.39 in our savings account.

III. We received a thank you letter from Michelle Oesner for the scholarship award he received from the FEA.

IV Robert Short, PNSY will provide a two-day seminar on retirement. The first set, one for CSRS the other for FERS employees will be held in the Portsmouth area in April, followed by the second set in the Concord area. The cost of the seminar is \$75.00 per person. The actual dates have not been set.

V The Awards banquet is scheduled for May 6th. The Asia Restaurant in Newington, NH, was selected for this year's location. The cost for the meal is set at \$20.00. Criteria for

the eight awards were distributed. See attached. Mailings will be going out soliciting nominations.

VI There were no further developments on our WEB page. We are still waiting for a host server.

VII The yearly golf tournament is the NHFEA sole money source. The incumbent coordinator, Mr. Alan Stewart is planning to continue as coordinator of the Annual Golf tournament, which the Board is extremely grateful. The NHFEA has been asked to assist with acquiring prizes and with more publicity. The tournament is limited to 144 players on a first come first serve basis and is scheduled for May 27th at the Country Club of New Hampshire, North Sutton, NH.

VIII Ms. Moaratty CFC Coordinator reported that:

1. CFC completed a record setting campaign raising \$902,903 for 2004.
2. We were notified that we would be audited by OPM/OIG for the 2002/2003 campaigns. They annually select campaigns for audit. It is a random selection for which we were long overdue. It will be a rather intensive examination of our entire CFC operation. We are beginning with document deliveries now with the on-site audit scheduled for August 15-18, 2005.
3. We are beginning the 2005 campaign process and charity applications are due April 4, 2005.
4. REMINDER: check out the CFC Website at www.nhsomecfc.org

IX A potential negative impact on Veterans and their families, who may also be Civil Servants and be currently participating in the Federal Mail Handlers Benefit Health Insurance Plan - Consumer Option was discovered.

The plan for the average person or family with low medical usage appears to be a good plan. The plan provides for a portion, approximately \$166.00 of one's \$190.00 monthly premium to be invested in a Health Savings Account (HSA). Additionally, one may contribute up to \$2,000.00 as a family into this account. The account is tax-free, accumulates tax-free interest, and it may be rolled over from year to year. Theoretically, if one does not draw on this account, it could accumulate about \$3,800.00 per year in tax-free savings. These funds may be used for medical expenses, which are described in detail in the program handout. The Insurance Plan carries a high deductible of \$10,000.00 per family, with the understanding that the Health Savings Account is to be used to defray some of the cost. Clearly, this program is intended for those who are well and who do not have high medical bills.

The issue: If one utilizes other Federal Programs such as the VA Medical Services, including the VA prescription drugs and medical services, he or she is disqualified from making contributions for three (3) months from the date of treatment. If one is a Veteran and is utilizing the VAMC once per quarter, or is receiving maintenance drugs once per quarter, his or her contribution to the HSA is reduced to AZERO. @ While Veterans themselves may not be affected, their families

certainly are. With the catastrophic limit of \$10,000.00 per family, all medical expenses will be borne by the families of the Veterans, without the benefit of the HSA.

Limitations or penalties under this program were unknown and unpublished, in the program brochure, prior the close of the enrollment period. In addition, it was not brought to the attention of members who called initially to implement their HSA account, as I had on January 4, 2005. The limitations came to light only recently.

The intent to limit this programs benefits for veterans is not clear. It appears that this program may adversely affect Veterans and their families. This is especially troubling, since these facts were known during the open enrollment season. It may also adversely impact the VAMC, since Veterans may choose not to utilize services of the VAMC to safeguard their family HSA benefit. This process occurs while the VAMC is attempting to register and attract more Veterans to use their VA Medical Centers. The Office of Personnel Management is aware of this issue, and they have authorized current participants to utilize the option of reversing back to their prior year health plan. Veterans who wish to exercise this option should contact their HR office. Additional assistance may be obtained from the OPM office, by contacting Susanne Turvin at 202-606-3818.

Peter Kawonczyk
Secretary