



**Labor, Employment & Benefits Alert**  
**November 2011**

**Department of Labor Extends Time for Compliance With Health Care Reform's Summary of Benefits and Coverage**

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The federal health care reform bill known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires group health plans to provide participants with a Summary of Benefits and Coverage ("SBC"). The SBC can be no longer than 4 pages (front and back) or less. The Department of Labor ("DOL") has released proposed regulations and a template for the SBC and has now received comments on the regulations and template.

According to the DOL, the SBC and a new uniform glossary of terms commonly used in health care are intended to give participants a better understanding of their health care coverage. The SBC will contain information on the covered benefits, cost sharing provisions, and coverage limitations, and participants will receive the SBC upon enrollment and at the beginning of every plan year.

The DOL has received a number of comments on the proposed regulations and template, and it is expected that there will be changes made in the final regulations. The comments were consistent in noting the difficulty plans would have meeting the time period for implementation, previously established as March 23, 2012. DOL has now responded to the concerns about the short turnaround time in a Frequently Asked Question ("FAQ"). In the FAQ, DOL stated that health plans will not have to comply with the SBC requirement until after the agency issues final regulations and that the final regulations would provide a new effective date that would give plans sufficient time to comply with the requirements.

Although the new effective date for the SBC requirement is unknown, it is anticipated that the requirement will not go into effect until at least late 2012 or early 2013.

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*If you have any questions or concerns about the material in this Advisory, please contact Katherine A. Hesse, Brian P. Fox or the attorney assigned to your account at (617) 479-5000.*

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