



303-980-1000

GINA, Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act

November 21, 2009 GINA, becomes law. Under IRS rules, **employers are prohibited from collecting genetic information** – defined as **family medical history** – in health risk assessments, if that information will be used for “underwriting” purposes. This includes offering employees discounts on their monthly premium contributions or lowering deductibles for completing an HRA. Employer-sponsored group health plans still may collect such information **after** enrollment closed, while providing medical treatment or in determining claims payment.

These interim final rules apply to **group health plans** with plan years beginning on or after Dec. 7, 2009. The IRS is accepting comments on the new rules, as well as any requests for a public hearing, until January 5, 2010.

Employers could be fined at least \$2,500 for failure to comply. The maximum penalty for unintentional violations is capped at 10% for the amount paid by the employer for its group health plan during the prior year or \$500,000 whichever is less. There is no cap for violations resulting from willful neglect or intentional misconduct.

Joanne Wojcik, Workforce Management

Jobs Hard to Fill

The 10 hardest jobs to fill, according to U.S. Employers:

Workforce Metrics 5/09

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Engineers | 6. Technicians |
| 2. Nurses | 7. Drivers |
| 3. Skilled, manual trades | 8. Information technology staff |
| 4. Teachers | 9. Laborers |
| 5. Sales representatives | 10. Machinists, machine operators |

Watch For Medical IT Opportunities

During the recession, many IT employees have been downsized. That will change. With the federal timeline for computerization of medical records by 2014, more IT workers will be needed for health care organizations. Projections range from 41,000 to 200,000 system installers, troubleshooters, systems administrators, database engineers, “cloud computing” techs who specialize in storing vast quantities of information over the Internet, and security-privacy architects.

Even though there is \$19 billion in incentives for hospitals to complete their computerization, only 1.5% of hospitals have comprehensive electronic records systems and 7.6% have implemented a system in at least one unit, according to a New England Journal of Medicine study published this year. Hospitals will lose their Medicare and Medicaid payments if not complying to the requirements.

With \$1.2 billion in hospital grants to be distributed in October, health care reform indecision, and other prioritized operational needs, health care leaders are waiting for federal decisions before moving ahead. Predictions are that in early 2010 the industry will begin offering higher pay and benefits to recruit IT candidates away from other industries.

Charlotte Huff, Crain Communication

Bob Hope Quotes

A comedian until 100 years old, some favorites: “Turning 70 – You still chase women, but only downhill.” “Turning 80 – Even your birthday suit needs pressing” “Turning 90 – Your candles cost more than your cake.” Turning 100 – I don’t feel old. In fact I don’t feel anything until noon. Then its time for a nap.”