

Federal Health Reform Policies that Affect Massachusetts Employers:

1. Small Business Tax Credit – new federal tax credits are available to help small businesses with low and middle-income workers pay for the cost of health insurance. Credits for Tax Years 2010 to 2013 are available effective March 23, 2010. The IRS has resources to help employers determine their eligibility and obtain the tax credits:

YouTube Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85i1kzIG57k>

Detailed Guidelines: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/n-10-44.pdf>

3-step Guide: http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-utl/3_simple_steps.pdf

FAQ: <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=220839,00.html>

One Page Flyer: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/newsroom/taxcreditflyer.pdf>.

The Small Business Majority has a “tax credit calculator” on their website that provides preliminary estimates for eligibility and savings.

Calculator link: <http://www.smallbusinessmajority.org/tax-credit-calculator/>

2. Grants for Small Employer Wellness Programs – funding is available to help small businesses offer programs to keep employees healthy. For 2011 through 2015, grants for small employers with fewer than 100 employees who work 25 hours or more per week are eligible. Guidance on how and when employers can apply is pending. Employers will need a well-defined plan for implementing a wellness program. The program should promote health awareness initiatives like preventive screenings and health risk assessments. Effective March 23, 2010
3. Early Retire Reinsurance Program – employers may receive financial assistance to help pay for the expensive medical costs of early retirees. For more information and how to apply:

New Early Retiree Reinsurance website: <http://www.ERRP.gov>

New Early Retiree Reinsurance hotline: 877-574-3777

4. Reasonable Break Time & Space for Nursing Mothers – employers must offer adequate break time and space for breastfeeding workers. The U.S. Dept. of Labor is working to define terms and processes for enforcement. Employers with 50 or fewer employees may seek an exemption.