



Axial Financial Group

Centered on You.

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Axial Financial Group

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Dear Clients: Summer is finally here and we hope you will have the chance to enjoy the nice weather with your friends and family. Although this is the time of year for rest and relaxation, at Axial we never take a vacation from working to protect and grow your investments or assisting you with other Wealth Management needs. Mid-year is a good time to make sure your 401K is allocated properly; to check that you have contributed to your IRA or Roth IRA for 2010; or simply to make sure all the different insurance products you have are meeting your current needs. We would be pleased to help you with any and all of these issues. Simply give us a call or send us an email and we will do our best to assist you in any way we are able. We look forward to talking to you or seeing you soon.
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How Will the Health-Care Bill Help You This Year?

The health-care bill that became law in March won't be fully implemented for several years. However, by the end of this year, six important measures (detailed below) will take effect.



Your health insurer can't drop you for making a mistake

In some cases, people have filed claims, only to be told that after reviewing their policy, the insurance company has rescinded their coverage because

of inconsistencies in the original application. The new law will require insurers to demonstrate fraud or intentional misrepresentation of a material fact--for example, deliberately concealing an existing illness--in order to rescind coverage after a claim is filed.

A child can stay on your health plan longer

If there's a recent high school or college grad in your family who's struggling to land that first job, you can choose to continue your child's dependent coverage under your plan until his or her 26th birthday. This applies to both individual and group policies (for existing workplace plans, it applies only if your child doesn't have his or her own employer's health plan).

If you or your child has a pre-existing condition, you'll be able to get health insurance

Under the health-care bill, children with pre-existing health conditions may not be denied health insurance coverage. Adults won't have that protection until 2014, but if you have a pre-existing condition, you may be able to obtain coverage beginning this summer through a temporary national high-risk insurance pool. However, only individuals with pre-existing conditions who have been uninsured for at least six months before applying for coverage through this insurance pool will be eligible.

Your total coverage will have no cap

In the past, some people were very happy with their health-care coverage--until they got really, expensively sick. Severe illness or an accident sometimes meant medical bills that exceeded the total amount of coverage their policy provided (so-called "lifetime limits" on coverage). The new law prohibits insurers from establishing lifetime limits on the total dollar value of health benefits that can be paid to any one insured individual.

You may get a rebate for some Medicare drug costs

The health-care bill gradually closes the Medicare prescription drug coverage gap known as the "donut hole." If you're covered by Medicare, you fall into this donut hole once your total prescription drug costs exceed \$2,830 a year; until you've spent an additional \$3,610 out of pocket, Medicare won't cover any of your prescription costs (figures are for 2010). If you're affected by this coverage gap this year, you can look forward to a \$250 rebate check from the federal government to defray at least part of your drug expenses. Next year's benefit could be even bigger; once you fall into the donut hole, you will receive a 50% discount on certain brand-name prescription drugs.

If you're a small business owner, you may receive a tax credit

If you're a qualifying employer who pays at least 50% of the cost of your employees' health insurance premiums, you may receive a tax credit to offset up to 35% of your premium contribution when you file your 2010 federal taxes. The credit is generally available to employers with fewer than 25 full-time workers with an average annual wage of less than \$50,000.



Returning to Work After You've Retired



No matter how much you've looked forward to retirement, you might find yourself missing the social interaction and financial benefits you enjoyed when you were employed. Perhaps getting a full- or part-time job will enable you to rely less on your retirement savings, leaving more to potentially grow for the future. Or maybe you're looking forward to pursuing your dream of owning a business. Whether working during retirement is a choice--or a necessity--make sure you understand the financial implications.

Finding the right work opportunity

Many people spend 20 years or more in retirement, so it's important to do something you love. If you don't quite know what that is, or you aren't ready to commit to a permanent position, you might try working in a contract job, or signing up with a temporary employment agency that will allow you to work when, and where, you wish. Some agencies even offer health and retirement benefits. If it's been a while since you searched for work, get in touch with a local career counselor to get tips on preparing a job application or resume, and to learn more about the jobs available in your community.

To help you determine your salary requirements and how many hours you'll work, spend some time reviewing your retirement plan, focusing on your retirement income needs. Then limit your job search to businesses that offer the right combination of pay, benefits, and working environment.

Working for yourself

Once you retire, you may finally be ready to turn your ideas and talents into a business. Mature entrepreneurs often have the time and experience necessary to become successful business owners. However, make sure you have enough capital to start up and run your business--it may take longer than you think for your business to become profitable. And don't jeopardize your retirement security by relying on your credit cards, life savings, and home equity to finance your business.

Will working affect your Social Security benefits?

If you're receiving Social Security retirement benefits and you're younger than your full retirement age (65 to 67), your benefits will be reduced if you earn more than a certain amount. In 2010, \$1 in benefits will be withheld

for every \$2 you earn over the annual earnings limit of \$14,160. A higher earnings limit applies in the year you reach full retirement age. If you earn more than this limit (\$37,680 in 2010), \$1 in benefits will be withheld for every \$3 you earn over that amount, until the month you reach full retirement age--then you'll get your full benefit every month thereafter, no matter how much you earn. (But note that even if your benefits are withheld, that reduction isn't permanent. Your benefit will be increased at full retirement age to account for the amount withheld because of your earlier earnings.)

Not all income reduces your Social Security benefit. In general, Social Security only takes into account wages you've earned as an employee, net earnings from self-employment, and other types of work-related income, such as bonuses, commissions, and fees. Pensions, annuities, IRA payments, and investment income won't reduce your benefit.

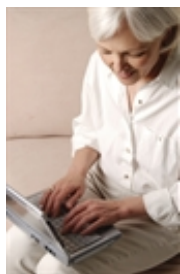
Also, keep in mind that working may enable you to put off receiving your Social Security benefit until a later date. In general, the later you begin receiving benefit payments, the greater your benefit will be. Whether delaying the start of Social Security benefits is the right decision for you depends on your personal circumstances.

What about income taxes? In general, your Social Security benefit won't be subject to income tax if that's the only income you receive during the year. But if you work during retirement (or you receive any other taxable income, or tax-exempt interest), a portion of your benefit may become taxable. IRS Publication 915 has a worksheet that can help you determine if any part of your Social Security benefit is subject to income tax.

Will working affect your pension?

Unless you plan to return to work with your former employer, your pension benefit won't be affected--you can work, receive a salary from your new employer, and also receive your pension benefit from your former employer. However, if you are considering taking another job--even part-time--with your former employer, check with your plan administrator. Some plans require that your pension benefit be suspended if you retire and then return to work for the same employer.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 29% of Americans age 65 to 69 are currently employed.



How Much Life Insurance Is Enough?

Your life insurance needs often depend on a number of factors, including whether you're married, the size of your family, the nature of your financial obligations, your career stage, and your goals.

There are a number of approaches you can use to figure out how much insurance you should have. One method, called the "family needs approach," focuses on the amount of life insurance it would take to allow your family to meet its various financial obligations and expenses in the event of your death.

Family needs approach

With the family needs approach, you divide your family's financial needs into three main categories:

- Immediate needs at death, such as cash needed for estate taxes and settlement costs, credit card and other debts including mortgages (unless you choose to include mortgage payments as part of ongoing family needs), an emergency fund for unexpected costs, and college education expenses.
- Ongoing income needs for expenses related to food, clothing, shelter, and transportation, among other things. These income needs will vary in amount and duration, depending on a number of factors, such as your spouse's age, your children's ages, your surviving spouse's capacity to earn income, your debt (including mortgages), and whether you'll provide funds for your surviving spouse's retirement.
- Special funding needs, such as college funding, charitable bequests, funding a buy/sell agreement, or business succession planning.

Once you determine the total amount of your family's financial needs, you subtract from this total the available assets that your family could use to defray some or all of their expenses. The difference, if any, represents an amount that life insurance proceeds, and the income from future investment of those proceeds, can cover.

Example: John and his wife, Wendy, are estimating the appropriate amount of life insurance to buy on John's life. They first estimate their immediate needs as follows:

- Final medical expenses: \$5,000
- Estate settlement costs including funeral and burial expenses: \$37,500

- Debts, including credit cards and mortgages: \$317,000

- Emergency fund: \$100,000

Subtotal: \$459,500

Next, they estimate ongoing income needs, such as:

- Providing for their dependent children's needs for a period of time: \$500,000

- Wendy's income needs until her retirement: \$450,000

- Wendy's retirement income needs: \$380,000

Subtotal: \$1,330,000

Adding the sub totals together, John and Wendy estimate that, should John die, their family would need \$1,789,500. They then determine that assets available to offset their needs include:

- Bank savings: \$40,000

- Investments: \$220,000

- Retirement assets: \$250,000

- Existing life insurance on John's life: \$300,000

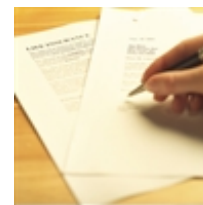
Subtotal: \$810,000

The difference between their family needs (\$1,789,500) and their available assets (\$810,000) equals their life insurance need (\$979,500).

Review your coverage

Trying to figure out how much life insurance is enough isn't always easy, and that amount will likely change with your changing circumstances. By examining your family's anticipated expenses during various periods after your death, you get a more realistic estimate of your life insurance needs.

Unfortunately, many people underestimate their insurance needs and are underinsured. Often, the purchase of life insurance is based on cost instead of what's needed. By the same token, it's possible to have more insurance than you need. You may have purchased a large policy during a particular point in your life, and then didn't adjust your coverage when your insurance need was reduced. Both of these circumstances are reasons to review your insurance coverage periodically with your financial professional. Doing so can reveal opportunities to change your levels of coverage to match your current and projected life insurance needs.



An insurance coverage review is a periodic reassessment of your insurance needs. The main objectives are to confirm that the level of insurance coverage you have is still adequate, to alert you to shortages in coverage that can occur due to changes in your life, and to ensure that any cash value policies are performing as expected.



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Ask the Experts



I started a business that lost money this year. Do I have a net operating loss (NOL)?

If you're a sole proprietor and your business expenses exceed your business income, you have a reportable loss for income tax purposes. You're generally able to apply this loss against any wage income or other business income that you have (wages are considered business income) and any nonbusiness income (e.g., interest) that remains after taking your allowable nonbusiness deductions. If you still have a business loss remaining after offsetting all your income, you have a "net operating loss" for the year. The net operating loss (NOL) calculation is very complicated, though. For example, certain items, like personal exemption deductions and other nonbusiness deductions, aren't allowed in calculating an NOL.

The general rule is that you get to carry back an NOL for 2 years. This means that you can apply the NOL as a credit against income that was earned in--and reported on the tax returns

for--the 2 years preceding the year in which you have the net operating loss. Any remaining loss is carried forward for up to 20 years after the year in which you have the NOL. You can, however, choose not to carry back the NOL to the prior 2 years and simply carry forward the entire NOL.

While NOLs are generally allowed to be carried back 2 years, special rules apply to NOLs incurred in 2008 and 2009 that allow NOLs to be carried back for up to 5 years. There are also exceptions to the general 2-year carryback rule, and alternative minimum tax (AMT) implications. Even in the most straightforward cases, NOLs are complicated.

If you have an NOL, you'll want to read IRS Publication 536, *Net Operating Losses (NOLs) for Individuals, Estates, and Trusts*, and the instructions for IRS Form 1045, *Application for Tentative Refund*. You should also consider discussing your situation with a tax professional.