



Lincoln  
Human  
Resource  
Management  
Association



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September, 2012



**No Monthly Meeting in September—  
See you in Omaha at the SHRM NE State Conference!**



**Presents:  
2012 SHRM Nebraska State Conference**



**Thursday, September 13th and Friday, September 14th, 2012  
CenturyLink Center, Omaha, NE**

**[The Conference Brochure can be found by clicking here](#)**

**Register online today!**

**You don't want to miss out on all of these pre-approved HRCI credits!  
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### Upcoming Meetings:

- Sept.—No Meeting. NE SHRM State Conf., Sept. 13—14, CenturyLink, Omaha, NE.  
 Oct. 9, 2012—Program and Workshop by Kenexa on Competency & Compensation  
 Nov. 13, 2012—Talent+, TBA  
 Dec. 11, 2012—Member Social, TBA

**Right:** Cathy Maddox at the August program promoting the SHRM NE State Conference



## CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to the following newly certified Human Resource Professionals who obtained their certification during the May/June exam window:

- **Sabrina Dahl, PHR**
- **Amanda Wilcox, PHR**
- **Julie Brittenham, SPHR**
- **Lindsay Selig, SPHR**

Please take time to congratulate those who passed. The certification exam is a difficult exam because it covers a wide variety of human resource issues. The pass rates for the exams are generally 65% for those taking the PHR (Professional in Human Resources) and 55% for those taking the SPHR (Senior Professional in Human Resources). Human Resource Certification is the symbol of professional achievement. Beyond experience and education, the PHR or SPHR designation signifies that you have mastered the HR body of knowledge.

Certification also provides:

- National recognition of your professional achievement;
- An aid for career advancement;
- A reminder to peers and co-workers of your professional achievement through the use of your certification designation on business correspondence.

Certification exams are administered via computer during two testing windows each year, May 1<sup>st</sup> thru June 30<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup> thru January 31<sup>st</sup>. To request a certification handbook or find out more about the exam, visit [www.hrci.org](http://www.hrci.org). If you would like to more information about LHRMA's Certification Study Group visit [www.lincolnhhr.org](http://www.lincolnhhr.org) or contact Joel Scherling or Amy Spellman at [certification@lincolnhhr.org](mailto:certification@lincolnhhr.org).

## President's Message

Judy Ganoung, LHRMA President



As you may have noticed at our monthly meetings, public speaking is not my favorite thing. The “presidents” portion of the monthly announcements is getting shorter and shorter. Hopefully, I haven’t excluded any critical information that you were receiving from our much more eloquent previous presidents. Honestly, I think it is the microphone that trips me up! Maybe by the end of my two years as president I will get better at this public speaking thing. In the meantime if you are missing pertinent information that you used to get during the announcements, please let me know in an email. I am great at emailing, ask the other board members.

Anyway, in my search on the web for how to get over stage fright and making the microphone my new best accessory I came across a few blogs that I thought I would share with you. Before I go any further, let me add the disclaimer that neither I nor LHRMA is endorsing any of the blogs. I just thought I would share.

The first blog I came across really caught my eye, “HR Bartender” (people and beverages – a no brainer for me). I was particularly surprised to find information on public speaking on the HR Bartender blog. Of course this gave me great hope that there were other HR chapter presidents that share my phobia. One suggestion was to arrive early and stand in front of the room for a lengthy amount of time so that I will become more comfortable with the surroundings. If you see me standing in the front of the room just looking around, that will be me...just getting comfortable with my surroundings. I’m not allowed to say “I’m not a professional speaker” although I don’t really need to say that since that fact is pretty evident.

What else? Oh yeah, I shouldn’t say “test, one, two, three” into the microphone to test out the sound. I’m to say something prolific like “I like Pop Tarts” which I do so I don’t have any problem saying that phrase. The sentence has a “P” in it so I can clearly hear how the microphone sounds. Apparently, not using a microphone is not an option. Why not you ask? The blog says you won’t pay attention to me – is that true?

Honestly, I was just happy that the advice wasn’t that I had to visualize you all with no clothes! It also told me to not wear my name tag, just in case someone takes my picture. Really? Honestly, Tuesday’s meeting was the first time that I remembered my name tag. I hate throwing out my new good habit. I’m just going to ignore that suggestion.

Here are some of the other blogs that I found: [HR Capitalist](#), [Tribe HR](#), [Simply Lisa](#), [TLNT](#), [Work Awesome](#), and, last but not least [SHRM](#) (Society of Human Resource Management). There are many more if you are interested let me know.

The SHRM site has current information, tools, surveys, and many ways to keep HR professionals in the loop with the latest issues. SHRM is an immeasurable resource for HR professionals. If you aren’t a member of SHRM and you are interested, LHRMA will be offering new SHRM membership offers. Watch for details or just ask any member of the LHRMA board for details. Also, don’t forget the LHRMA website, Facebook and LinkedIn sites. These sites are great places for sharing information and asking questions.

See you at the SHRM State Conference!

— Judy Ganoung



Find us on Facebook.  
Become a fan and join  
the conversation.

# Legal Update

## The Affordable Care Act is Constitutional: Now What?

By Keith A. Prettyman, Woods & Aitken LLP

On June 28, 2012, the United States Supreme Court upheld, almost in its entirety, the Affordable Care Act ("ACA"). In the majority opinion written by Chief Justice John Roberts, the Court held that the individual mandate imposes a "tax" on individuals who fail to purchase health insurance coverage and that the broad taxing powers in the Constitution give Congress the authority to impose the tax. Much has already been written about the decision, and it is not the purpose of this eBrief to explain/discuss the decision. While there will be legislative attempts to repeal or revise the ACA, as of now there is no reprieve from the law, it is in effect, and employers and their plans must, *quickly*, come into full compliance.

What follows is a very brief summary of the ACA provisions that are either already in effect or soon will be:

- Provisions which were Effective in 2011
  - ◇ Plans must provide dependent coverage for children up to age 26 (there is a small exception for "grandfathered plans" - those that were in effect on March 23, 2010);
  - ◇ Plans may not rescind coverage retroactively except for fraud;
  - ◇ Plans may not place lifetime limits on essential health benefits and may only have annual dollar limits on essential health benefits which are at or above specified and increasing levels; and
  - ◇ Plans may not impose pre-existing condition exclusions on those under the age of 19.
- Claims and Appeals Procedures - Effective July 1, 2012, every group health plan is required to have internal and external claims review procedures that comply with expanded requirements of the ACA. An employer's group health plan documents will need to be amended accordingly.
- W-2 Reporting - For employers who will issue 250 or more W-2's in 2013 for the 2012 calendar year, the W-2 must report the total cost of employer-sponsored health coverage.
- Medical Loss Ratio ("MLR") Rebates - If the insurer for an employer with a fully insured group health plan paid less in claims than required by the ACA, the insurer is to distribute an MLR rebate to the employer shortly after August 1, 2012. The employer should have procedures in place for allocating and distributing any rebates to employees and for determining if the rebates constitute plan assets under ERISA.
- Preventive Health Services - Effective August 1, 2012, non-grandfathered group health plans must provide specified preventive health service benefits on a first-dollar basis. This requires that there be no cost sharing for employees for the required services. The mandated services include providing contraceptive drugs and devices to female participants. The plan documents will have to be amended accordingly.
- Summary of Benefits and Coverage ("SBC") - Employers are required to provide the SBC for open enrollment periods beginning on or after September 23, 2012, and for new hires beginning on the first

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day of the plan year beginning on or after that date. The SBC is a four-page summary of benefits and coverage which must fully comply with a predetermined format. The requirements for the SBC are stringent, and there are serious penalties for noncompliance.

- Provisions that become Effective in 2013 include:
  - ◇ Limits on Flexible Spending Accounts - Effective the beginning of the first plan year beginning on or after January 1, 2013, cafeteria plans must be amended to provide for a \$2,500 limit on contributions to health care flexible spending accounts.
  - ◇ FICA Tax - Effective January 1, 2013, employers must increase the hospital insurance portion of FICA by 0.9% for employees with compensation in excess of \$200,000 (\$250,000 if filing jointly). Employers will need to modify their payroll systems accordingly.
  - ◇ Medicare Tax on Unearned Income - Effective January 1, 2013, there will be a tax of 3.8% applied to the lesser of net investment income or adjusted gross income in excess of \$200,000 individual/\$250,000 filing jointly.
  - ◇ Exchange Notices - No later than March 1, 2013, employers will be required to provide written notice to employees about the existence of the State insurance exchanges. In addition, this notice must provide that if the employer's share of the total allowed cost of benefits provided under its plan is less than 60%, the employee may be eligible for a premium credit.
- Provisions that become Effective in 2014: Additional provisions, including mandatory changes to employer health plans, the employer “pay or play” mandate, state insurance exchanges and the individual mandate will become effective in 2014.

This is a very brief summary of the employer requirements under the ACA. For those who would like a more complete and thorough explanation of the requirements as well as for those who have questions and want answers, Woods & Aitken LLP is hosting a two-hour webinar on this topic on Wednesday, September 12, 2012, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. For additional information or to register for the webinar please follow this [link](#).

# Fresh Balsam Wreaths

LHRMA is offering fresh, handmade Minnesota balsam fir wreaths to raise money for the SHRM Foundation. Each wreath will be delivered the first week of December, in an attractive gift box that keeps it fresh and full. Includes a hanger and greeting card. Wreaths are delivered directly to you— or if it's a gift, to a lucky recipient—saving you time and money!

**These florist-grade wreaths make excellent corporate gifts for your clients or employees, gifts for the hard to buy for, and gifts for friends and family out of state. You may even want to buy one for your own home!**

Make this year's shopping easier  
**AND** support the SHRM Foundation!

**Makes a Great Gift!**





**Classic:** Handmade with the freshest Minnesota Balsam Fir and beautifully decorated with selected white tipped and glittered pinecones. Festively accented with jingle bells and trimmed with a gold back red velvet bow.  
**25 inches - \$41 delivered**

**Victorian:** A taste of old world craftsmanship in holiday décor. This wreath has a silky burgundy ribbon with imprinted wire edges, natural bronze pinecones accented with gold jingle bells, satin finished ball ornaments, and lights.  
**25 inches - \$44 delivered**



**Cranberry Splash:** A traditional festive wreath made from natural balsam fir boughs and is decorated with a generous 4-inch wide plush fabric bow with gold wired edges. Ornamental trimmings include faux cranberry sprigs and gold juniper sprigs. 3 natural bronze ponderosa pine cones laced with gold and jingle bells set the finishing touches.  
**25 inches - \$45 delivered**

Contact Denice Sears, LHRMA SHRM Foundation Officer  
402-489-1406 or [hrmandas@windstream.net](mailto:hrmandas@windstream.net)

October 18 is the last day to order  
Payment by cash, check or credit card.  
Order online at [www.lincolnhr.org](http://www.lincolnhr.org)

## EAP Corner

### Soft Skills; Hard Results

Patricia Cavanah, Consultant/Trainer  
Best Care EAP

How is it that such critical skills as communication, teamwork, and interpersonal relationships are considered *soft skills*? Truly, soft skills are anything but soft since, for some, they are quite hard to master. And yet, many people discount soft skills in favor of the non-squishy, technical expertise needed to do a job, otherwise known as *hard skills*.

True, it may be that hard skills are more quantifiable and therefore more easily measured in comparison to those fluffy soft skills. Using this logic, however, would lead us to the conclusion that something immeasurable has lesser value, which is totally illogical; think, for example, of compassion, of empathy, of integrity and of respect.

But, is it really so difficult to measure the soft skills which provide the foundation for our emotional intelligence? Even without a measuring device, we've all seen the negative affects when soft skills are missing in the workplace. Do low morale, employee conflict, performance issues, poor attendance, and high attrition ring a bell?

Fortunately, both employers and employees are recognizing the value of soft skills and their importance in the workplace. The Stanford Research Institute International and the Carnegie Mellon Foundation, in fact, found that 75% of long-term job success depends on people skills, while only 25 percent on technical knowledge.

Perfecting our soft skills and thereby enhancing our emotional intelligence benefits us in our personal and professional lives. Although soft skills are a faceted myriad, three important areas where we all might look to improve are the following:

**Communication:** Thanks to technology, we can communicate with ease due to various options we have including texting, voice mails, e-mails, etc. And yet, the root of so many personal and professional issues is communication! It seems that we either do it poorly, inappropriately, or not at all.

Much of our communication is done without words; 75% of communication is visual (i.e., body language, voice tone, eye contact, etc.). People with enhanced soft skills are more skilled in interpreting these visual cues and benefit by truly understanding the actual message being conveyed in a conversation.

Being a good listener, a critical element to effective communication, is another quality found in people with strong soft skills. Being attentive and listening to others demonstrates respect which enhances relationships.

**Teamwork:** Maybe you're not suiting up for the first football game of the season, but all of us are team members. Your team may be your department at work, your family, your group of friends, or an organization to which you belong. Being a quality team member can be hard work which soft skills can help alleviate.

Valuing team mates comes easy for those with superior soft skills. Respecting and finding the value in others helps us remain unified and focused on team goals. Supporting the team decisions even when we may disagree demonstrates our ability to collaborate and compromise.

Sensitivity, one of our soft skills, helps us recognize when a team mate is struggling, display compassion and

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concern for them, and ungrudgingly make sacrifices to help them.

**Interpersonal Relationships:** Since we don't go through life alone, developing meaningful relationships with people just makes sense! But, developing meaningful relationships is more than "friending" someone on Facebook, or linking up with someone on LinkedIn.

Soft skills allow us to truly connect with others. Having a genuine concern for someone and connecting with them on a personal level allows for trust to develop and subsequently grow into a relationship. And, keep in mind; business is nothing more than a network of relationships!

How often have we heard the statement that people don't leave companies, they leave managers? If you are a manager, understand the power of soft skills. A good manager recognizes when to coach an employee. A great manager coaches by utilizing soft skills to motivate employees and leads their team with their head *and* their heart.

If you need help embracing your soft skills or making more meaningful connections with others, your EAP provider can help. Call them today and see the hard results you can achieve by exploring your soft skills!

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

### **Paula Lueders**

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### **Lori Sadler**

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**Welcome! You've joined an outstanding organization!**



### **Drawing Winner**

Who Says There's No Such Thing  
as a Free Lunch?

Congratulations to  
**Melissa Zahourek** with  
Ameritas Life Ins. Melissa will  
receive free registration for  
the October program.



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