



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Up next: Medicare SOAF will continue consumer education

by Cecilia Green
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Last fall, the Society of Actuaries Foundation (SOAF) launched its first consumer education program, "On the edge of change: Putting Social Security back in balance." The former chief actuary of the Social Security Administration, Dwight K. Bartlett III, oversaw the project, which was planned by a team of actuarial and other experts and facilitated through a \$150,000 grant to the SOA Communications Department.

Six months later, almost 105,000 brochures had been distributed to employees and customers at several "partner" companies, libraries, and schools and at retirement seminars and other presentations. News articles extracted the unbiased information prepared by actuaries in the brochure and reached another 2.2 million people.

Partners who made larger distributions include:

- Baker & McKenzie
 - Bell Boyd & Lloyd
 - Board of Pensions
 - Farm Bureau Financial
 - First Colony Life Insurance
 - First Penn-Pacific Life Insurance Co.
 - Griffith Labs
 - Group Health Inc.
 - Robert Hess
 - Lee & Associates
 - Lincoln National Corp.
 - Miami Valley Pension Service
 - Minnesota Mutual Life Insurance Co.
 - Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance
 - Professional Pension Planners
- Overall, nearly 800 companies requested partner packages, and more

than 400 companies actually ordered quantities ranging from 200 through 20,000.

Social Security program survey results

Just distributing information does not ensure goals of the program had been met. Did readers have a better understanding of the Social Security system and its future fiscal health after reading the brochure? Of the 3% who returned the survey card inserted in the brochure, 89% agreed that they did. More than 60% of the respondents valued it enough to pass the brochure on to another person, bringing the estimated circulation up to 168,000.

Other responses to the survey questions revealed a high level of confidence that Social Security and



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES FOUNDATION

Preparing for tomorrow's possibilities

Foundation to publish genetic testing presentations

by Cecilia Green
SOA Public Relations Director

After cosponsoring an unprecedented gathering of stakeholders in a new medical frontier, the Society of Actuaries Foundation is in the process of producing a publication summarizing the 11 presentations made at the June 24-25 symposium, "Genetic Testing: Implications for Insurance."

About 130 invited participants heard leading geneticists, bioethicists, medical directors, lawyers, regulators, actuaries, and underwriters discuss the emerging issues surrounding genetic testing. The Foundation joined with the University of Pennsylvania Center for Bioethics and Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's Medical

Department, which hosted the event at MetLife's home office in New York.

"Bringing all these experts together for frank exchanges resulted in an astonishing burst of creative ideas and discussion," said James C. Hickman, Ph.D., Foundation trustee. "The Foundation believes it's important that we share the thinking that this conference stimulated to an even wider audience."

"The purpose of the symposium was not to be a forum for creating policy, or even creating a consensus on the issues," according to Charles G. Hertz, M.D., vice president and chief medical director for MetLife. "The main objectives were to present factual information, to iden-

tify the key issues facing the various disciplines represented, and to allow for an open discussion."

Driving the need to bring issues to the forefront is the rapid scientific advancements being made by the Human Genome Project. The National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Human Genome Research Institute is currently about two years ahead of schedule in its goal to identify the 3 billion component code letters of the human genetic makeup and the location of all its genes by 2005. "This information will allow identification of genes that contribute to specific diseases," Hertz said, "which in turn will lead to diagnostic tests and

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