

INSIDE the Beltway

Written by Dave Kirby

SIIA Takes the Case for Self-Insurance to Congress on Both Sides of the Aisle

As part of SIIA's ongoing advocacy activities, Board of Directors member **Bob Clemente** and Vice President of Government Relations **Ryan Work** visited a number of Democratic and Republican Members who serve on pivotal congressional committees that would be likely to consider legislation affecting self-insurance.

"Our goals of these and future meetings on the Hill are to continue our education campaign about self-insurance and stop-loss insurance with Members and their staff," Work said. "What continues to be clear is that there is not a full awareness of the importance and use of self-insurance, which is why SIIA continues to be a leading proactive voice to educate and brief policymakers."

The meetings included the Capitol Hill offices of:

- Both Pennsylvania Senators, **Robert P. Casey** (D), ranking member of the HELP and Finance Committees and **Patrick J. Toomey** (R), chairman of the Finance Health Subcommittee. As part of this meeting, the SIIA delegation also met with **Brad Grantz**, staff director of the Finance Health Subcommittee.
- Members of the Education and Workforce Committee, **Rep. Marc Pocan** (D-WI) and **Rep. Katherine Clark** (D-PA).
- Members of the Energy and Commerce Committee, **Rep. Mike Doyle** (D-PA) and **Rep. Paul Tonko** (D-NY).
- Member of the Financial Services Committee **Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick**, (R-PA).

SIIA Board member Clemente, Chief Executive Officer of Specialty Care Management of Lahaska, Pennsylvania, was upbeat in describing the reactions of Members and their staffs. "We were pleased that representatives of both parties were generally positive toward our message and we had a good reception everywhere," he said.

"There seems to be less clutter around our issues now than when the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was being debated in Congress," Clemente said. "The view that self-insurance is trying to steal healthier people from the exchanges has seemed to fade. There's less caution on the part of, particularly, Democrats since the Congressional Budget Office report in February that said that's just not happening."

Clemente said that such meetings with Members of Congress in Washington, DC, or in their home districts continue to be a vital process. "Reinforcing Members' awareness of self-insurance sets the stage for future support," he said.

"It specifically lays the groundwork for consideration of the Self-Insurance Protection Act (SIPA) (S. 775 and HR 1423) as that bill moves ahead. We're looking for bipartisan support as Members become aware that self-insurance provides the health care for over a hundred million Americans."

Congressional relations is not a "one-and-done" process, in Clemente's view. "We need to be here on an ongoing basis because members of the House are elected every two years and staff members change continually.

"The most important visitor to any Congressional office is that person who is a constituent of the senator or representative's home state or district. SIIA members who can state the case for self-insurance in the context of health care, jobs and economic development always get a fair hearing from their representatives and their staffs."

SIIA's Work indicated that Congressional visits for the association's members are a critical component of its proactive approach to strategic outreach and will continue on a regular basis. ■

SIIA members who wish to join the campaign to educate Members of Congress are welcome to contact Ryan Work in the Washington office at rwork@siaa.org or (202) 595-0642.