

## Members report positive receptions In Congressional offices during Legislative/Regulatory Conference

SIIA members' traditional Walk on the Hill was greeted with more than the usual polite responses in Congressional offices during the recent Legislative/Regulatory Conference in Washington, D.C.

Ron Dewsnap of Allegiance Benefit Plan Management of Missoula, Montana, is well acquainted with his state's senators, Jon Tester and Steve Daines, and was especially impressed with SIIA members' reception in their offices.

*“They really seem to be getting our message. I believe SIIA has never been more highly respected or more listened to in Washington than now,”*

said Dewsnap who has participated in many past Legislative/Regulatory Conferences during his SIIA tenure that has included a term on the board of directors and chairmanship of the Benefits Committee.

“The strength of the conference lineup of speakers and the ability of SIIA members to meet the right people in Congress speaks to SIIA's momentum in federal advocacy,” Dewsnap said.



Ryan Work, Vice President of Government Relations, said this was an especially important year – and time of year during the Congressional session – to hold the Legislative/Regulatory Conference. “It was particularly beneficial for us to show a strong presence in Washington of SIIA members expressing their support for the Self-Insurance Protection Act,” he said. SIPA was overwhelmingly approved by the House of Representatives in a 400-16 vote and now must be passed by the Senate to become law.

A first-time participant in the Legislative/Regulatory Conference, Brad Roehrenback of MedCost in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, said SIIA has become his company’s primary outlet for federal advocacy.

*“The most valuable aspect of the conference was getting to talk with people who are closest to events in Congress and the federal agencies,”* Roehrenback said. *“We got a snapshot view of health care policy formation that can dramatically affect our business.”*

“The SIIA conference enabled us to form relationships and gain a platform to speak with policy makers much more effectively than going on our own,” Roehrenback said. “And we got the benefit of rubbing shoulders and getting the perspectives of our peers who are dealing with some major changes in our industry. I feel that SIIA is building positive momentum that inspires us to be part of continued successful advocacy.”

Kevin Seelman of Lockton-Dunning Benefits in Dallas agreed regarding the positive receptions many SIIA members found in the Senate Office Building. “Staff members in Senator Ted Cruz’s office expressed genuine



Kevin Seelman

interest in our message and they were especially impressed by the 400-vote support SIPA received in the House. To them, that seemed to mean that protecting self-insurance is way beyond partisan politics.

*“For a first-timer at this conference, the most interesting thing to me is how the process works and the intensity of legislative staff in gathering information,”* Seelman said. *“I think most people don’t realize what these people do to help our country on a daily basis.”*

For James Slotnick of Sun Life in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, the Legislative/Regulatory Conference provided an ideal platform for SIIA’s core messages. “The employer-based health insurance market is the greatest untold story of health care reform,” he said. “It’s the market that works without the controversies of the individual market.



"The beauty of events like this is that they bring to Washington a broad coalition of people including top executives of companies in the self-insurance industry as well as business owners who bring the weight of many thousands of constituents to their meetings with Congress," Slotnick said.

"For SIIA members who weren't able to attend the conference, I would add that there is nothing difficult or daunting in meeting with Congressional offices," Slotnick added. "SIIA does a great job of setting meetings and preparing our members to communicate our messages.

"And it doesn't take a major conference for this to happen," Slotnick said. "Members can come to Washington on their own schedule and SIIA will set you up with your own Walk on the Hill."

SIIA members with inquiries about federal government relations issues are welcome to contact Ryan Work at [rwork@siaa.org](mailto:rwork@siaa.org) or (202) 595-0642. ■

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