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New Research from EBRI:

Offering Benefits Still Gives Employers a Competitive Advantage

WASHINGTON—The vast majority of workers say that the benefits package an employer offers—especially health insurance—is important to their decision to accept or reject a job, but a quarter are not satisfied with them, according to a new survey.

More than three-quarters of employees state that the benefits package an employer offers prospective employees is extremely (33 percent) or very (45 percent) important in their decision to accept or reject a job, according to the 2013 Health and Voluntary Workplace Benefits Survey (WBS), by the nonpartisan Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) and Greenwald and Associates.

Nevertheless, 31 percent are only somewhat satisfied with the benefits offered by their current employer, and 26 percent are not satisfied.

Workers identify lower cost (compared with purchasing benefits on their own) and choice as strong advantages of voluntary benefits. However, they are split with respect to their comfort in having their employer choose their benefits provider, and think the possibility that they may have to pay the full cost of any voluntary benefits is a disadvantage.

Workers continue to rank health insurance as the first or second most important benefit provided by employers: 88 percent of employees report that employer-provided health insurance is extremely or very important, far more than for any other workplace benefit, the WBS found.

“Employee benefits continue to be important to workers,” said Paul Fronstin, director of EBRI’s Health Research and Education Program and co-author of the report. “Employers that offer a strong employee benefits package should find themselves with a competitive advantage over other companies when it comes to attracting and retaining desirable employees.”

As the EBRI report notes, benefits coverage in the workplace, including health insurance, is far from universal. Three-quarters of employees (76 percent) report their employer offers them health insurance. Two-thirds each indicate they are offered dental insurance (67 percent) or a retirement savings plan (66 percent), and more than half say they are offered vision insurance (60 percent), life insurance (58 percent), and short-term disability insurance (55 percent) by their

employer. About half are offered long-term disability insurance (49 percent) and accidental death and dismemberment insurance (48 percent).

However, just 38 percent report being offered a traditional pension or defined benefit plan, and only one-quarter (25 percent) are offered long-term care insurance. Fewer report being offered retiree health insurance (22 percent) or other non-core ancillary benefits.

The full report, “Views on the Value of Voluntary Workplace Benefits: Findings from the 2013 Health and Voluntary Workplace Benefits Survey,” is published in the November *EBRI Notes*, online at www.ebri.org

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