

Aetna Member Visits White House To Discuss HSAs

By [Deb Hoyt](#), Public Affairs

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One week ago, Raul H. Gonzalez, of Arlington, Texas, an Aetna Health Savings Account (HSA) small group member, never imagined he would be invited to the White House to share his personal story about how his HSA has changed his life.

It all began last month when Gonzalez, director of Administration for Passman & Jones, a law firm in Dallas, mentioned how pleased he was with his Aetna HSA to Roberta Moreno, Aetna's regional sales and service director, Southwest region Small Group. From there, a combination of good luck and timing led Gonzalez to a semi-private meeting with President George W. Bush on Monday, April 2.



U.S. President George W. Bush met on Monday with a group that included Raul H. Gonzalez (to the left of Bush), of Arlington, Texas, an Aetna HSA small group member.

Gonzalez spent an hour meeting with the president for a small group session on the benefits of HSA plans. Also in attendance were: U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael Leavitt; Assistant to the President, Deputy Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor Karl Rove; White House Chief of Staff Josh Bolten; Deputy Assistant to the President for Economic Policy and Deputy Director of the National Economic Council Keith Hennessey; and Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy (Health) Julie Goon. Six additional individual HSA health plan members from across the country also were in attendance to share their stories.

Gonzalez shared how his Aetna HSA plan not only saved him and his family money, but it encouraged him to take a serious look at his lifestyle. As a result, he has lost weight, reduced his cholesterol enough to eliminate the need to control it through prescription drugs, and the new plan motivated him to take control of his health after being diagnosed and treated for cancer. In addition to handling his personal health insurance, Gonzalez handles the responsibility for selecting his company's health insurance benefits for the 32 employees of Passman & Jones and their family members.

"I shared with the president that we took a hard look at the firm's rising health premiums and after much research chose Aetna's HSA product in 2006 to help the company control our health insurance costs," said Gonzalez. "Our HSA account has been a cost-saving tool for our company and has enabled us to get our premiums in check so that we have the financial ability to operate our law firm more efficiently while educating and encouraging our employees to take control of their health."

Gonzalez added that the firm uses the premium cost savings to fund their employees' health savings accounts as a way of investing in their good health.

"The Bush administration has been a strong supporter of consumer-driven products and has followed the success and adoption of HSAs since health insurers launched them in January 2004," said Charlie Iovino, Federal Government Relations representative for Aetna. "It was important for the president and his top advisors to hear first-hand from individual consumers about how the new health plan designs are enabling individuals to afford coverage while making them more savvy consumers."

The insurance industry's national trade association, Americas Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), also released encouraging new data stating that 4.5 million Americans now are enrolled in HSA plans, an increase of 1.3 million new HSA members in one year, with 27 percent of the new individual HSA market enrollees being previously uninsured.



Aetna member Raul Gonzalez (left) poses at the White House with Charlie Iovino, Aetna Federal Government Relations.

4.5 Million Americans have Health Savings Accounts (HSA) or High-Deductible Health Plans (HDHP)