

amount of the employee's HSA contribution (matching contributions), are the contributions subject to the section 4980G comparability rules?

A-2: No. The comparability rules do not apply to HSA contributions that an employer makes through a section 125 cafeteria plan. Thus, where matching contributions are made by an employer through a cafeteria plan, the contributions are not subject to the comparability rules of section 4980G. However, contributions, including matching contributions, to an HSA made under a cafeteria plan are subject to the section 125 nondiscrimination rules (eligibility rules, contributions and benefits tests and key employee concentration tests). See Q & A-1 of this section.

Q-3: If under the employer's cafeteria plan, employees who are eligible individuals and who participate in health assessments, disease management programs or wellness programs receive an employer contribution to an HSA and the employees have the right to elect to make pre-tax salary reduction contributions to their HSAs, are the contributions subject to the comparability rules?

A-3: (a) *In general.* No. The comparability rules do not apply to employer contributions to an HSA made through a cafeteria plan. See Q & A-1 of this section.

(b) *Examples.* The following examples illustrate the rules in this § 54.4980G-5. The examples read as follows:

Example 1. Employer A's written cafeteria plan permits employees to elect to make pre-tax salary reduction contributions to their HSAs. Employees making this election have the right to receive cash or other taxable benefits in lieu of their HSA pre-tax contribution. The section 125 cafeteria plan nondiscrimination rules and not the comparability rules apply because the HSA contributions are made through the cafeteria plan.

Example 2. Employer B's written cafeteria plan permits employees to elect to make pre-tax salary reduction contributions to their HSAs. Employees making this election have the right to receive cash or other taxable benefits in lieu of their HSA pre-tax contribution. Employer B automatically contributes a non-elective matching contribution or seed money to the HSA of each employee who makes a pre-tax HSA contribution. The section 125 cafeteria plan non-

discrimination rules and not the comparability rules apply to Employer B's HSA contributions because the HSA contributions are made through the cafeteria plan.

Example 3. Employer C's written cafeteria plan permits employees to elect to make pre-tax salary reduction contributions to their HSAs. Employees making this election have the right to receive cash or other taxable benefits in lieu of their HSA pre-tax contribution. Employer C makes a non-elective contribution to the HSAs of all employees who complete a health risk assessment and participate in Employer C's wellness program. Employees do not have the right to receive cash or other taxable benefits in lieu of Employer C's non-elective contribution. The section 125 cafeteria plan nondiscrimination rules and not the comparability rules apply to Employer C's HSA contributions because the HSA contributions are made through the cafeteria plan.

Example 4. Employer D's written cafeteria plan permits employees to elect to make pre-tax salary reduction contributions to their HSAs. Employees making this election have the right to receive cash or other taxable benefits in lieu of their HSA pre-tax contribution. Employees participating in the plan who are eligible individuals receive automatic employer contributions to their HSAs. Employees make no election with respect to Employer D's contribution and do not have the right to receive cash or other taxable benefits in lieu of Employer D's contribution but are permitted to make their own pre-tax salary reduction contributions to fund their HSAs. The section 125 cafeteria plan nondiscrimination rules and not the comparability rules apply to Employer D's HSA contributions because the HSA contributions are made through the cafeteria plan.

Q-4: May all or part of the excise tax imposed under section 4980G be waived?

A-4: In the case of a failure which is due to reasonable cause and not to willful neglect, all or a portion of the excise tax imposed under section 4980G may be waived to the extent that the payment of the tax would be excessive relative to the failure involved. See sections 4980G(b) and 4980E(c).

[T.D. 9277, 71 FR 43058, July 31, 2006]

§ 54.4980G-6 Special rule for contributions made to the HSAs of non-highly compensated employees.

Q-1: May an employer make larger contributions to the HSAs of nonhighly compensated employees than to the HSAs of highly compensated employees?

A-1: Yes. Employers may make larger HSA contributions for nonhighly compensated employees who are comparable participating employees than for highly compensated employees who are comparable participating employees. See Q & A-1 in § 54.4980G-1 for the definition of comparable participating employee. For purposes of this section, highly compensated employee is defined under section 414(q). Nonhighly compensated employees are employees that are not highly compensated employees. The comparability rules continue to apply with respect to contributions to the HSAs of all nonhighly compensated employees. Employers must make comparable contributions for the calendar year to the HSA of each nonhighly compensated employee who is a comparable participating employee.

Q-2: May an employer make larger contributions to the HSAs of highly compensated employees than to the HSAs of nonhighly compensated employees?

A-2: (a) *In general.* No. Employer contributions to HSAs for highly compensated employees who are comparable participating employees may not be larger than employer HSA contributions for nonhighly compensated employees who are comparable participating employees. The comparability rules continue to apply with respect to contributions to the HSAs of all highly compensated employees. Employers must make comparable contributions for the calendar year to the HSA of each highly compensated comparable participating employee. See Q & A-1 in § 54.4980G-1 for the definition of comparable participating employee.

(b) *Examples.* The following examples illustrate the rules in Q & A-1 and Q & A-2 of this section. No contributions are made through a section 125 cafeteria plan and none of the employees in the following examples are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. All of the employees in the following examples have the same HDHP deductible for the same category of coverage.

Example 1. In 2010, Employer A contributes \$1,000 for the calendar year to the HSA of each full-time nonhighly compensated employee who is an eligible individual with self-only HDHP coverage. Employer A makes no

contribution to the HSA of any full-time highly compensated employee who is an eligible individual with self-only HDHP coverage. Employer A's HSA contributions for calendar year 2010 satisfy the comparability rules.

Example 2. In 2010, Employer B contributes \$2,000 for the calendar year to the HSA of each full-time nonhighly compensated employee who is an eligible individual with self-only HDHP coverage. Employer B also contributes \$1,000 for the calendar year to the HSA of each full-time highly compensated employee who is an eligible individual with self-only HDHP coverage. Employer B's HSA contributions for calendar year 2010 satisfy the comparability rules.

Example 3. In 2010, Employer C contributes \$1,000 for the calendar year to the HSA of each full-time nonhighly compensated employee who is an eligible individual with self-only HDHP coverage. Employer C contributes \$2,000 for the calendar year to the HSA of each full-time highly compensated employee who is an eligible individual with self-only HDHP coverage. Employer C's HSA contributions for calendar year 2010 do not satisfy the comparability rules.

Example 4. In 2010, Employer D contributes \$1,000 for the calendar year to the HSA of each full-time nonhighly compensated employee who is an eligible individual with self-only HDHP coverage. Employer D also contributes \$1,000 to the HSA of each full-time highly compensated employee who is an eligible individual with self-only HDHP coverage. In addition, the employer contributes an additional \$500 to the HSA of each nonhighly compensated employee who participates in a wellness program. The nonhighly compensated employees did not receive comparable contributions, and, therefore, Employer D's HSA contributions for calendar year 2010 do not satisfy the comparability rules.

Example 5. In 2010, Employer E contributes \$1,000 for the calendar year to the HSA of each full-time non-management nonhighly compensated employee who is an eligible individual with family HDHP coverage. Employer E also contributes \$500 for the calendar year to the HSA of each full-time management nonhighly compensated employee who is an eligible individual with family HDHP coverage. The nonhighly compensated employees did not receive comparable contributions, and, therefore, Employer E's HSA contributions for calendar year 2010 do not satisfy the comparability rules.

Q-3: May an employer make larger HSA contributions for employees with self plus two HDHP coverage than employees with self plus one HDHP coverage even if the employees with self plus two are all highly compensated

employees and the employees with self plus one are all nonhighly compensated employees?

A-3: (a) Yes. Q & A-1 in § 54.4980G-4 provides that an employer's contribution with respect to the self plus two category of HDHP coverage may not be less than the contribution with respect to the self plus one category and the contribution with respect to the self plus three or more category may not be less than the contribution with respect to the self plus two category. Therefore, the comparability rules are not violated if an employer makes a larger HSA contribution for the self plus two category of HDHP coverage than to self plus one coverage, even if the employees with self plus two coverage are all highly compensated employees and the employees with self plus one coverage are all nonhighly compensated employees. Likewise, the comparability rules are not violated if an employer makes a larger HSA contribution for the self plus three category of HDHP coverage than to self plus two coverage, even if the employees with self plus three coverage are all highly compensated employees and the employees with self plus two coverage are all nonhighly compensated employees.

(b) *Example.* The following example illustrates the rules in paragraph (a) of this Q & A-3. In the following example, no contributions are made through a section 125 cafeteria plan and none of the employees are covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

Example. In 2010, Employer F contributes \$1,000 for the calendar year to the HSA of each full-time employee who is an eligible individual with self plus one HDHP coverage. Employer F contributes \$1,500 for the calendar year to the HSA of each employee who is an eligible individual with self plus two HDHP coverage. The deductible for both the self plus one HDHP and the self plus two HDHP is \$2,000. Employee A, an eligible individual, is a nonhighly compensated employee with self plus one coverage. Employee B, an eligible individual, is a highly compensated employee with self plus two coverage. For the 2010 calendar year, Employer F contributes \$1,000 to Employee A's HSA and \$1,500 to Employee B's HSA. Employer F's HSA contributions satisfy the comparability rules.

Q-4: What is the effective date for the rules in this section?

A-4: The rules in this section are effective for employer contributions made for calendar years beginning on or after January 1, 2010.

[T.D. 9457, 74 FR 45998, Sept. 8, 2009]

§ 54.4980G-7 Special comparability rules for qualified HSA distributions contributed to HSAs on or after December 20, 2006 and before January 1, 2012.

Q-1 How do the comparability rules of section 4980G apply to qualified HSA distributions under section 106(e)(2)?

A-1: The comparability rules of section 4980G do not apply to amounts contributed to employee HSAs through qualified HSA distributions. However, in order to satisfy the comparability rules, if an employer offers qualified HSA distributions, as defined in section 106(e)(2), to any employee who is an eligible individual covered under any HDHP, the employer must offer qualified HSA distributions to all employees who are eligible individuals covered under any HDHP. However, if an employer offers qualified HSA distributions only to employees who are eligible individuals covered under the employer's HDHP, the employer is not required to offer qualified HSA distributions to employees who are eligible individuals but are not covered under the employer's HDHP.

Q-2: What is the effective date for the rules in this section?

A-2: The rules in this section are effective for employer contributions made for calendar years beginning on or after January 1, 2010.

[T.D. 9457, 74 FR 45999, Sept. 8, 2009]

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 - (4) Applicable large employer.
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