

[4830-01-u]

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

26 CFR Part 54

[Reg-109708-97]

RIN 1545-AV12

HIPAA Newborns' and Mothers' Health Protection Act

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking by cross-reference to temporary regulations.

SUMMARY: Elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**, the IRS is issuing temporary regulations relating to minimum hospital length-of-stay requirements imposed on group health plans with respect to mothers and newborns. The hospital length-of-stay requirements were added to the Internal Revenue Code by section 1531 of the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. The IRS is issuing the temporary regulations at the same time that the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Health Care Financing Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are issuing substantially similar interim final regulations relating to hospital length-of-stay requirements added by the Newborns' and Mothers' Health Protection Act of 1996 to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Public Health Service Act. The temporary regulations provide guidance to employers and group health plans relating to the new hospital length-of-stay requirements. The text of those temporary

regulations also serves as the text of these proposed regulations.

DATES: Written comments and requests for a public hearing must be received by January 25, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send submissions to: CC:DOM:CORP:R (REG-109708-97), room 5226, Internal Revenue Service, POB 7604, Ben Franklin Station, Washington, DC 20044.

Submissions may be hand-delivered to: CC:DOM:CORP:R (REG-109708-97), room 5226, Internal Revenue Service, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC.

Alternatively, taxpayers may submit comments electronically via the Internet by selecting the "Tax Regs" option on the IRS Home Page, or by submitting comments directly to the IRS Internet site at: http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/tax_regs/comments.html

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Russ Weinheimer, (202) 622-4695 (not a toll-free number).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The temporary regulations published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register** add §54.9811-1T to the Miscellaneous Excise Tax Regulations. These regulations are being published as part of a joint rulemaking with the Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services (the joint rulemaking).

The text of those temporary regulations also serves as the text of these proposed regulations. The preamble to the temporary regulations explains the temporary regulations.

Special Analyses

This regulation is not subject to the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 because the regulation is an interpretive regulation. It has also been determined that section 553(b) of the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. chapter 5) does not apply to this regulation, and because the regulation does not impose a collection of information on small entities, the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. chapter 6) does not apply. For further information and for analyses relating to the joint rulemaking, see the preamble to the joint rulemaking. Pursuant to section 7805(f) of the Internal Revenue Code, this notice of proposed rulemaking will be submitted to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration for comment on its impact on small business.

Comments and Requests for a Public Hearing

Before these proposed regulations are adopted as final regulations, consideration will be given to any written comments (a signed original and eight (8) copies) that are submitted timely to the IRS. All comments will be available for public inspection and copying. A public hearing may be scheduled if requested in writing by a person that timely submits written comments. If a public hearing is scheduled, notice of the date, time, and place for the hearing will be published in the

Federal Register.

Drafting Information

The principal author of these proposed regulations is Russ Weinheimer, Office of the Chief Counsel (Employee Benefits and Exempt Organizations), IRS. However, other personnel from the IRS and Treasury Department participated in their development. The proposed regulations, as well as the temporary regulations, have been developed in coordination with

personnel from the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

List of Subjects in 26 CFR Part 54

Excise taxes, Health insurance, Pensions, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Proposed Amendments to the Regulations

Accordingly, 26 CFR part 54 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 54--PENSION EXCISE TAXES

Paragraph 1. The authority citation for part 54 is amended by adding an entry in numerical order to read as follows:

Authority: 26 U.S.C. 7805 * * *

Section 54.9811-1 also issued under 26 U.S.C. 9833. * * *

Par. 2. Section 54.9811-1 is added to read as follows:

§54.9811-1 Standards relating to benefits for mothers and newborns.

[The text of this proposed section is the same as the text of §54.9811-1T published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**].

Deputy Commissioner of Internal Revenue

Michael P. Dolan