

How a little-known piece of bipartisan legislation could help hard-working Americans stay healthy:

The Personal Health Investment Today Act (PHIT)

Finally. A way to help hard-working Americans stay healthy and active. It's PHIT—legislation working its way through Congress that would make physical activity, including youth sports, fitness equipment, and health club memberships more affordable.

The backdrop

Americans carry the weight of their healthcare costs more than ever before. In fact, healthcare costs top the list of financial worries according to a [2016 Gallup survey](#).

A growing number of workers now carry deductibles—83% of single coverage employees—and these deductibles have risen dramatically, [up 49%](#) since 2011.

Today, more than half of all single coverage workers carry an annual deductible of at least [\\$1,000](#). The average comes in at \$1,478, and exceeds \$2,000 at small firms.

What's more, healthcare [costs](#) are increasing faster than wages, taking a bigger chunk out of the family budget. In fact, the average American family now spends 10% of its income on health insurance premiums and deductibles alone.

Decades of research prove that leading a physically active lifestyle is integral to good health, and good health means lower individual healthcare spending.

Needless to say, staying healthy pays

The catch is, while staying physically active saves money in the long run, there are costs. And, paradoxically, even though we know that regular exercise helps prevent many common and costly chronic diseases, our current healthcare system and tax code don't give hard-working Americans a break.

At the moment, activity expenses aren't typically covered by health insurance—and they're not tax deductible. While some enlightened insurance companies see the value of exercise and offer discounts for gym memberships, payments are not a tax-deductible medical expense.

That's where PHIT comes in. It's a legislative solution that would give hard-working Americans greater choice in how their healthcare dollars are spent.

About PHIT

[PHIT](#) (the Personal Health Investment Today Act - Senate Bill (S.482) and House Bill (H.R.1267)) is federal legislation that would allow the use of pre-tax accounts, like Health Savings Accounts (HSA) and Flexible Savings Accounts (FSA), to pay for qualified fitness expenses, including youth sports fees, exercise equipment, and health club memberships.

Currently, the IRS code allows these accounts to pay for 'sick care' like doctor visits, medical procedures, and prescription medications. However, exercise and other lifestyle medicine expenses that prevent disease and preserve people's health are not covered.

If passed, PHIT would not expand pre-tax savings amounts but would allow the existing savings (\$1,000 for individuals, \$2,000 for families) to be used for fitness and athletic activities—a projected savings of 20-30% on fitness costs each year.

PHIT is already winning support from both sides of the aisle, thanks to Senators John Thune (R-SD) and Chris Murphy (D-CT) and Representatives Ron Kind (D-WI) and Jason Smith (R-MO) who reintroduced the bill into Congress on March 1, 2017. Since March, the bill has received robust bipartisan support from 118 lawmakers, 55 R and 63 D, or 105 house and 13 senate.

Since Americans are carrying—and feeling—the growing weight of healthcare costs, shouldn't they have greater choice on how their healthcare dollars are spent? And shouldn't an investment in staying well—that is, an investment in staying physically active—be on the menu? America's healthcare dilemma is extremely complex and will require many solutions, but passing PHIT would be a meaningful first step in making physical activity an easier financial choice.

Americans

Call on Congress to pass PHIT at hub.ihrsa.org/phit-act