



Dear Employee,

As we all know, November is *Flexible Spending* sign-up month for most organizations. A *Flexible Spending Account* lets you pay less money in taxes by enabling you to spend pre-tax dollars on certain health care expenses. It is a benefit that is definitely worth considering if you have health care expenses or medical expenses that you can estimate for the coming year.

Did you know you may be able to use money in your Flexible Spending Account to pay for the Vtrim weight loss program? A weight loss program prescribed by your physician to treat a medical condition (such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension or heart disease) is considered a medical expense.

Vtrim is an online weight loss program at the University of Vermont. Dr. Jean Harvey-Berino, lead researcher for 17 years, developed this program in clinical studies at the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences. The program has proven to generate greater weight loss than a commercial web program because of its evidenced-based design. (See *Obesity* Vol. 15 No. 1 January 2007). *Vtrim* is not self-guided but rather taught by university-certified facilitators with professional credentials. The components of this 24-week program (journaling intake and exercise, weekly lessons, weekly meetings and professional feedback) produce clinically-meaningful weight loss (average of 24 pounds), and most importantly, lifestyle change. Each weekly, one-hour group meeting of 20 participants is offered on the *Vtrim* website accessed from anywhere.

All weight loss program expenses submitted through flex spending need a doctor's referral specifying the medical condition requiring weight loss. Once you are officially signed up for *Vtrim*, you may be able to use the money from your *2010 Flexible Spending Account* if your participation is approved as a medical expense. The referral must be reviewed by your HR representative for final approval. You can use the money in your Flexible Spending Account from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010.

See you online!
Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beth Casey Gold". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Beth Casey Gold, MS, RD
Vtrim Corporate Outreach