Coordinator: Welcome, and thank you for standing by. At this time all parties are in a listen-only mode. This conference is being recorded, if you have an objection, please disconnect. I'd now like to introduce you to your first speaker, Jane Walstedt. Thank you. You may begin.

Jane Walstedt: Thank you, Joel and welcome to the fourth in a series of Wi$eUp teleconference calls this year and thanks to each of you who are participating today. My name is Jane Walstedt, and I'm the Co-Chair of the Women's Bureau Team that developed the Wi$eUp program.

The title of today's call--which will last one hour--is “Health Insurance: A Key Component in Financial Planning.”

In the 2009 MetLife Study of the American Dream, 78% of the respondents said that a personal safety net includes not just cash, but many important financial and protection products, such as life insurance, health insurance and retirement savings; fifty-seven percent said that health insurance was a component of their safety net.

According to the 7th Annual MetLife Study of Employee Benefit Trends, 56% of employees were highly concerned about having appropriate health insurance for themselves and their families.

In 2007 39% of women had health insurance through their own job, 25% had job-based insurance as a dependent, 18% were uninsured, 10% were covered by Medicaid, 3% had other government insurance, and 6% had individually purchased insurance, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation's October 2008 fact sheet *Women's Health Insurance Coverage*. 
Last Tuesday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released the findings of the latest National Compensation Survey.\textsuperscript{1} With regard to medical care benefits, they show that a higher percentage of state and local government workers than of private industry workers had access to medical care benefits in March 2009, 88\% versus 71\% respectively; however only about half of private industry workers participated in a plan compared with 73\% of state and local government workers. I point this out because some of the registrants for today's call are state and local government workers.

The survey also shows that incidence of employee benefits varies by worker characteristics and by establishment characteristics. For example, private industry workers in service occupations have less access to medical care benefits than private industry management, professional and related workers, 46\% versus 86\%. And part-timers and workers in lower wage percentiles have less access to medical care benefits than full-timers and workers in higher wage percentiles.

Since Wi$eUp is a project targeted at Generation X and Y women, it might interest you to know that if you look at the uninsured by age groupings in data collected by the Census Bureau,\textsuperscript{2} in 2007 those ages 18-24 and 25-34 had higher percentages of uninsured than other age groupings--28.1\% and 25.7\% respectively.\textsuperscript{3}

A 2008 report by the National Women's Law Center found that the individual health insurance market is a very difficult place for women to buy health coverage.\textsuperscript{4} Specifically it found that

\begin{itemize}
  \item Women often face higher premiums then men.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{3} Table 6, People Without Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2007, August 2008.
\textsuperscript{4} Nowhere to Turn: How the Individual Health Insurance Market Fails Women.
• It is difficult and costly for women to find health insurance that covers maternity.

• Insurance companies can reject applicants for health coverage for a variety of reasons that are particularly relevant to women, such as being survivors of domestic violence or having previously had a Caesarean section; and that

• While both women and men face additional challenges in the individual insurance market, such as premiums based on age and health status, these problems compound the affordability challenges women already face.

But I don't want to take any more time away from our speakers. So let me just briefly say that the format of our call today is that we'll first hear from the three speakers, then when the speakers have finished the operator will come on and give us instructions about how to ask a question during the question and answer session at the end of the presentations.