July 20, 2000

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Commission

THROUGH: James A. Pehrkon
Staff Director

FROM: Lawrence M. Noble
General Counsel

N. Bradley Litchfield
Associate General Counsel

Subject: Draft AO 2000-17

Attached is a proposed draft of the subject advisory opinion. We request that this draft be placed on the agenda for July 27, 2000.

Attachment
Dear Mr. Rieser:

This responds to your letter dated June 9, 2000, on behalf of Extendicare Health Services, Inc. ("Extendicare"), requesting an advisory opinion concerning the application of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended ("the Act"), and Commission regulations to the formation and administration of a separate segregated fund ("SSF" or "PAC") by a domestic subsidiary corporation that is wholly-owned by a foreign parent corporation.

Extendicare is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and it is wholly owned by Extendicare, Inc., a Canadian corporation with its principal place of business in Ontario, Canada. Through its wholly-owned subsidiaries, which are all United States entities, Extendicare operates 237 nursing and assisted living and retirement centers in 14 States with more than 25,000 people employed by either Extendicare or its domestic subsidiaries. Extendicare provides home office management and administrative services for its operating subsidiaries that operate the cited nursing and retirement centers.

Factual background

Extendicare’s board of directors has changed from time to time in both size and composition over the years. Currently the board is comprised of three individuals, only

---

1 Extendicare is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Extendicare Holdings, Inc. ("Holdings"), a Wisconsin corporation with its principal place of business in Milwaukee. Holdings serves as the ultimate U.S. parent corporation, but its role is limited to that of a holding company: it has no operating assets and performs no management or administrative services. Holdings is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Extendicare International, Inc., a Canadian corporation, which, in turn, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Extendicare, Inc., the top level parent corporation. The stock of this parent Canadian corporation is traded on the Toronto and New York Stock Exchanges.

2 Extendicare's 1999 consolidated revenues from USA operations were over $967 million, although its consolidated positive cash flow from operations that year was less than $19 million. It had a consolidated loss for 1999, but had earnings in each of the preceding four years exceeding $25.5 million.
one of whom is a US citizen. The other two are Canadian citizens who are not lawfully
admitted for permanent residence in the United States, although they are lawfully
admitted to the United States for both residence and work purposes. One of the Canadian
directors is chair of the Extendicare board and is also deputy chair and CEO of the parent
Canadian corporation. The other Canadian director is CEO of Extendicare and president
of the parent Canadian corporation. The US citizen director is also the chief finance
officer of both Extendicare and the parent Canadian corporation. The Extendicare
president (not a board member) is a Canadian citizen who is not lawfully admitted for
permanent residence in the United States. Of the remaining officers, a number are foreign
citizens. In Extendicare’s top management structure, there are board-elected officers,
vice presidents who are not board-elected, and senior managers (with various titles and
designations), hereinafter referred to as the "senior management team." Presently, the
overwhelming majority of Extendicare’s senior management team are U.S. citizens. One
such official is Extendicare’s vice president of government relations who is a United
States citizen.

This vice president seeks Commission advice regarding whether Extendicare may
establish and administer an SSF under the Act and Commission regulations that would
solicit contributions from the eligible personnel of Extendicare and its subsidiaries who
may lawfully make such contributions. The proposed SSF would make contributions to
candidates for Federal and, perhaps (to the extent permitted under applicable State laws),
State and local offices. In view of the foreign national status of two (out of three)
members of Extendicare’s board and given that its parent corporation is a foreign
national, an approach for determining whether to establish an SSF is described. A plan of
operation for an SSF is also described in the event that one is formed.

Special Committee proposal

The request states and explains that Extendicare’s board would establish a special
committee (the “Special Committee”). This Special Committee would be comprised only
of individuals who are U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens residing in the United
States. The Special Committee would be charged with the authority and responsibility to
determine whether it would be desirable and appropriate for Extendicare to establish an
SSF under 2 U.S.C. §441b(b)(2). If it should determine that it would be desirable and
appropriate for Extendicare to establish such an SSF, the Special Committee would also
have the authority and responsibility to determine what individual or individuals (the
“PAC Committee”) would administer the fund. Subject to the requirement that the
members of the PAC Committee both be employees of Extendicare or its subsidiaries and
be U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens residing in the United States, the Special
Committee would have complete discretion in determining the size and composition of
the PAC Committee. In particular, the Special Committee would not be required to
appoint to the PAC Committee only those individuals who were members of the Special
Committee; it would have the authority to appoint those individuals whom it deemed
best, regardless of whether or not they were members of the Special Committee. To the
extent that the PAC Committee needs by-laws by which to govern itself, the Special
Committee would expect to have the authority to approve and amend them.

The request further explains that the PAC Committee would have the complete
authority to administer the SSF, without review or approval by the Special Committee or
by Extendicare’s board of directors. That is, it would decide: what individuals among
Extendicare’s (and its subsidiaries’) work force would be solicited for contributions to the
fund and when to solicit such contributions; to whom to make contributions and when to
make them; and what expenditures to make from the fund and when to make them.

According to the request, Extendicare’s by-laws presently allow the board to
designate committees, to be comprised of one or more directors. The by-laws provide
that, to the extent permitted by law and provided by the resolution establishing the
committee, the committee shall have and may exercise all of the powers of the board in
the management of the business and affairs of the corporation. The by-laws currently are
silent with respect to whether individuals who are not directors may serve on such
committees.

To the extent that Extendicare’s board includes U.S. citizens or permanent
resident aliens residing in the United States, it would be anticipated (but not necessarily
foreordained) that all or some of such individuals would be appointed to serve on the
Special Committee. However, because the size and composition of the board changes from time to time, it cannot be predicted in advance whether the board would always have at least one such individual on it. As a result, in order to assure that a Special Committee could always be constituted, it is proposed that Extendicare's by-laws would be specifically amended both to permit the board of directors to appoint the Special Committee and to provide that such Special Committee may or may not include members of the board of directors, as the board sees fit. Such an amendment to the by-laws will require the approval of either Extendicare's board or its shareholders.

**Opinion format**

Given this factual background and the described circumstances, Extendicare asks ten questions concerning the proposal to form and operate a PAC. Questions one through seven are set forth with some editing of the actual phrasing as used in the request. Questions eight through ten are substantially revised and consolidated since they present the same legal issue. To facilitate the Commission's response, the basic statutory and regulatory provisions are stated initially and then applied to answer each question.

**Act and Commission regulations**

The Act and Commission regulations prohibit a foreign national from making a contribution, directly or through any other person, or an expenditure in connection with an election to any political office.\(^3\) In addition, it is unlawful to solicit, accept, or receive a contribution from a foreign national. 2 U.S.C. §441e(a); 11 CFR 110.4(a)(1) and (2).

As defined in the Act, the term "person" includes a corporation. 2 U.S.C. §431(11).

The term "foreign national" includes a "foreign principal" as defined by 22 U.S.C. §611(b), but does not include any citizen of the United States. 2 U.S.C. §441e(b)(1).

Section 611(b) defines a "foreign principal" to include:

(1) a government of a foreign country and a foreign political party;

(2) a person outside of the United States, unless it is established that such person is an individual and a citizen of and domiciled within the United States.

\(^3\) Unlike most of the other provisions of the Act, section 441e applies to any election for any political office, including state and local as well as Federal offices. *United States v. Kanchanalak*, 192 F.3d 1037, 1044 (D.C. Cir. 1999) [concluding that Commission interpretations of 2 U.S.C. §441e in both its regulations and an advisory opinion have "consistently interpreted §441e as applicable to federal, state, and local elections since 1976."]
States, or that such person is not an individual and is organized under or
created by the laws of the United States or of any State or other place
subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and has its principal place of
business within the United States; and

(3) a partnership, association, corporation, organization, or other combi-
nation of persons organized under the laws of or having its principal place
of business in a foreign country.

Accordingly, under §611(b)(2) and (3), a corporation organized under the laws of
any State within the United States that has its principal place of business in the United
States is not a foreign principal. Therefore, it follows that such a corporation would not
be a foreign national under 2 U.S.C. §441e. The term "foreign national" also includes an
individual who is not a citizen of the United States and who is not lawfully admitted for
§441e(b)(2).

Commission regulations, at 11 CFR 110.4(a)(1)–(4), implement the foreign
national prohibition, explaining its broad scope and barring foreign national participation
in certain election-related activities:

(a) Contributions or expenditures by foreign nationals.

(1) A foreign national shall not directly or through any other person make a
contribution, or an expenditure, or expressly or impliedly promise to make a
contribution, or an expenditure, in connection with a convention, a caucus, or a
primary, general, special, or runoff election in connection with any local, State, or
Federal public office.
(2) No person shall solicit, accept, or receive a contribution as set out above from
a foreign national.
(3) A foreign national shall not direct, dictate, control, or directly or indirectly
participate in the decision-making process of any person, such as a corporation,
labor organization, or political committee, with regard to such person's Federal or
nonfederal election-related activities, such as decisions concerning the making of
contributions or expenditures in connection with elections for any local, State, or
Federal office or decisions concerning the administration of a political committee.
(4) For purposes of this section, foreign national means --
(i) A foreign principal, as defined in 22 U.S.C. 611(b); or
(ii) An individual who is not a citizen of the United States and who is not lawfully
admitted for permanent residence, as defined in 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(20);
(iii) Except that foreign national shall not include any individual who is a citizen
of the United States.
The Commission has applied section 110.4(a)(3) in past advisory opinions that considered factual situations and circumstances similar to those presented here. For example, in Advisory Opinion 1995-15, the Commission approved a PAC’s operating structure where its sponsoring domestic corporation was about to be acquired by a foreign corporation. The attributes of the PAC’s future composition included that all its members and officers would be US citizens. Citing this fact among others, along with prior advisory opinions, the Commission concluded that: “after the company is acquired by a foreign corporation, foreign nationals will not direct, control, or otherwise participate directly or indirectly in the decision-making process of the PAC, including the administration of or contributions by the PAC.” Advisory Opinion 1995-15. In other opinions applying the cited regulations, the Commission has emphasized the requirement that foreign nationals, who are either on the corporate board or hold other positions with the corporation, may not vote on the selection of individuals who would operate the PAC or exercise decision-making authority with respect to contributions and expenditures by the PAC, or by the domestic corporation itself in non-federal elections. Advisory Opinions 1992-16, and 1990-8; see also Advisory Opinion 1989-29 [same emphasis in opinion issued prior to adoption of 11 CFR 110.4(a)(3) where non-federal PAC was funded with corporate treasury moneys and proposed to make contributions only in non-federal elections subject to State law]. Recently, in Advisory Opinion 1999-28, the Commission indicated that the conclusions and guidance within these opinions have continued relevance to the operations of an SSF established by the United States subsidiary of a foreign national parent corporation. Given the cited regulations as applied in the cited opinions, and subject to the responses to the questions set forth below, Extendicare may establish and function as the connected organization for a PAC.

Questions and responses

(1) Extendicare requests advice as to whether it is necessary to delegate to the Special Committee the decision whether or not to establish a separate segregated fund, and whether it is permissible under the Act for the board to make that decision, provided that it delegates to the Special Committee the authority to select the members of the PAC Committee.

(2) As long as at least one member of Extendicare’s board of directors is a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident alien residing in the United States, would it be
permissible if the Special Committee established by the board consisted only of
such director or directors?

(3) May the board also appoint non-directors to the Special Committee? If so, must
any other members of the Special Committee be board elected officers of
Extendicare? May non-board elected officers be appointed? May non-officer
employees be appointed?

The board itself may make the general corporate policy decision to establish an
SSF. However, it must delegate all other decisions, such as personnel selection and
administration of the SSF, to the Special Committee or to some other corporate personnel
group comprised exclusively of United States citizens or individuals lawfully admitted for
permanent residence in the United States. Such a delegation could also be made to one
director, officer or other executive of Extendicare who is not a foreign national. If the
board itself was comprised solely of foreign nationals, this required delegation must give
exclusive power to the delegatee to select the personnel who will be members of the
Special Committee or other similar group.

Commission regulations would not bar the board’s appointment of non-directors,
non-board elected officers or non-officer employees to the Special Committee, but such
appointments may only be made by those board members who are not foreign nationals.
If, at some future time, there are no US citizen (or permanent resident alien) board
members then an executive officer of Extendicare (who is not a foreign national) would
have to be granted this appointing authority. All such appointees to the Special
Committee are required to be either US citizens or permanent resident aliens in the
United States.

(4) Regardless of whether or not any members of the board of directors are U.S.
citizens or permanent resident aliens residing in the United States, may the
Special Committee be comprised solely of non-directors?

Yes, this is merely a matter of internal corporate policy and practice. As indicated
above, the membership of the Special Committee may not include foreign nationals, and
foreign nationals at the board level or otherwise may not appoint the members of the
Special Committee.
(5) Must members of the Special Committee be appointed for a fixed term, to be replaced by the board only upon the expiration of such term or in the event of a vacancy created by death, departure from Extendicare, etc., or may the members of the Special Committee serve at the pleasure of the board?

Subject to the responses to questions (1) through (4) above, it would not matter whether the members of the Special Committee served for a fixed term or at the pleasure of the board. If desired, the Special Committee could be a self-perpetuating body, subject to the responses above.

(6) Must members of the PAC Committee be appointed for a fixed term, to be replaced by the Special Committee only upon the expiration of such term or in the event of a vacancy created by death, departure from Extendicare, etc., or may members of the PAC Committee serve at the pleasure of the Special Committee?

It makes no difference whether the PAC Committee members are appointed for a fixed term or may serve at the pleasure of the Special Committee. What matters is the foreign national status of any person or body that appoints these personnel and the appointees own status as either US citizens or permanent resident aliens in the United States. The Commission emphasizes that, in addition to complying with §441e, the appointees to the PAC Committee would also have to qualify as executive or administrative personnel of Extendicare or one of its affiliated corporations. 2 U.S.C. §441b(b)(7), 11 CFR 114.1(c).

(7) Must members of the PAC Committee be board-elected officers of Extendicare, or may non-board elected officers, or non-officer employees, be appointed by the Special Committee to the PAC Committee?

Otherwise eligible personnel within any of the stated personnel groups may be appointed to the PAC Committee. They must themselves be US citizens or permanent resident aliens in the United States and may be appointed only by personnel with that same status. See response to question six and footnote 4.

---

4 The Commission notes that if Extendicare forms an SSF, the contribution solicitation and other functions of the SSF (and Extendicare to support the SSF) shall comply with 2 U.S.C. §441b(b)(1)–(7) and Commission regulations at 11 CFR Part 114. See, in particular, 11 CFR 114.5; see also Advisory Opinion 1999-28 which discusses the application of the cited SSF regulations in the same context as presented here, the PAC of a USA subsidiary of a foreign parent corporation.
Questions eight through ten generally pose the issue of the extent to which, if at all, the directors or officers of Extendicare who are foreign nationals may exercise control and oversight authority over the PAC Committee (and the PAC) with respect to personnel and financial matters. With respect to personnel, the request explains that some members of the PAC Committee may be supervised by Extendicare officers and executives who are foreign nationals and who would, in the normal course of their supervisory functions, have authority to make performance evaluations, compensation reviews and other similar personnel decisions pertaining to these PAC personnel. The Extendicare job descriptions for such personnel would not specify duties for the PAC Committee, but those appointed thereto would assume PAC responsibilities as a part of their regular jobs. With respect to financial oversight, the request notes that personnel who will have PAC Committee duties hold positions in corporate departments of Extendicare whose budgets would be affected by the time and other corporate resources attributable to their PAC functions. The board currently reviews and approves the budgets for these departments and would propose to continue that function even if it represents a form of control over the direct or indirect costs paid by Extendicare for the establishment and administration of its PAC.

The Commission responds to questions eight through ten, as summarized above, by applying two discrete sections of its regulations. Namely, §114.5(d) allowing a corporation to exercise control over its SSF, and §110.4(a)(3) barring any foreign national from direction, control or participation in the decision-making process of any person, such as a corporation or political committee with respect to the person’s Federal election-related, such as decisions concerning the administration of a political committee. As was indicated in the response to questions one through three, the Extendicare board may make a general corporate policy decision to establish an SSF; it may similarly make a general corporate policy decision to terminate an SSF whose establishment it previously authorized. Those core decisions represent a permissible exercise of corporate control over an SSF by any corporation, including one that, like Extendicare, is owned by a foreign parent corporation or by other foreign nationals.

---

An SSF is one type of political committee under Commission regulations. 11 CFR 100.5(b).
Beyond this level of basic corporate control through its governing board, other
decisions of Extendicare and its personnel relating to the PAC, including its formation
and operating policies, come within the purview of the foreign national prohibition as set
forth in §110.4(a)(3). In the context of the circumstances posed in this request, the dual
focus of the regulation is significant; it prohibits foreign national participation in the
decision-making process concerning a corporation’s election-related activities (such as
the formation of a PAC) and concerning the administration of a PAC once established.
As already indicated in the responses above, this means that foreign national directors of
Extendicare must avoid any participation in the formation of the PAC beyond making the
basic decision at the corporate board level to authorize the PAC’s establishment. Board
members and other Extendicare officers or executives who are not foreign nationals must
be the only personnel group who take the PAC formation and operating policy
development and implementation processes to the next levels. For example, selecting
and giving PAC work assignments to personnel who will serve on the Special Committee
or PAC Committee must be made only by US citizens or individuals lawfully admitted
for permanent residence in the United States. If there is no board member who qualifies
as such a person, the board’s decision must be limited to only a general delegation of
authority to one or more individuals at the officer or executive level, none of whom are
foreign nationals. Such persons would then proceed, without oversight or control by the
board, with the selection of eligible and qualified personnel to serve on the Special
Committee or the PAC Committee.

With respect to the supervision by foreign nationals of other personnel (not
foreign nationals) who have functions on the PAC Committee, the Commission
concludes that a reasonable approach should be followed that would avert the possibility
of arbitrary actions, favorable or unfavorable, by a foreign national supervisor solely on
the basis of a subordinate’s performance of duties with respect to PAC Committee
matters. One permissible policy would be to require that all performance evaluations and
compensation reviews (and other similar personnel related actions), to the extent they
entail consideration of the PAC functions of personnel who are subordinates of foreign
nationals, be based exclusively on the input to the supervisor by the most senior person
on the PAC Committee who has direct knowledge of the employee’s performance of PAC functions. Other approaches may also be reasonable. The Commission would not require that a separate system of supervision and evaluation be established outside the normal structure of personnel administration within Extendicare.

With respect to the board’s normal and usual power to review and approve departmental budgets, the Commission recognizes that the “power of the purse” may inevitably be asserted in a manner that could curtail, maintain or enhance the level of corporate support for the PAC; either in terms of personnel using official “company time” for PAC duties, covering direct or indirect administrative costs associated with PAC operations, or providing use of corporate equipment and facilities for PAC matters. (Such support must, of course, comply with 11 CFR 114.1(b) of Commission regulations.) As indicated above, the Commission also recognizes that the board, having itself authorized the formation of a PAC or authorized a Special Committee to determine whether it should establish a PAC, may also make a decision to terminate a PAC at any time after its formation. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that a reasonable approach, one which comports with the cited regulation barring foreign national participation in decisions concerning the administration of a PAC, should be followed. One reasonable approach would be for the board to approve budget levels for the direct costs of PAC support merely as a formality, in reliance solely on financial data and other information provided by the Special Committee or the PAC Committee. Another would be to set a specific budget level for PAC direct costs at a “not to exceed” amount. The board’s review power (short of a decision to terminate the PAC entirely), should be limited to ascertaining and enforcing compliance by the Special Committee or the PAC Committee with the budget levels established by the board in accord with the above described procedures. Other budget setting and review procedures for the direct costs of PAC operations may also be reasonable if they assure compliance with Commission regulations. With respect to the indirect costs to Extendicare for PAC operations, the usual and normal corporate procedures for budget decisions and review may be followed and would not be prohibited by Commission regulations.
This response constitutes an advisory opinion concerning the application of the Act, or regulations prescribed by the Commission, to the specific transaction or activity set forth in your request. See 2 U.S.C. §437f.

Sincerely,

Darryl R. Wold
Chairman
