

# WHICH IRA IS *best?*



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## **ROTH IRAS ARE EVERYWHERE, BUT THEY'RE NOT FOR EVERYONE**

**BY ANNIKA FERRIS, C.F.P., C.I.M.A.®**

What's all the hype these days about Roth IRA conversions? Starting in 2010, all individuals have the opportunity to convert their traditional IRAs to Roth IRAs, regardless of their income level. Additionally, for 2010 only, taxes due from a conversion may be paid over two tax years instead of one. While Roth conversions are all the rage, they are not appropriate for everyone.

### **Traditional IRA vs. Roth IRA— What's the Difference?**

Both types of retirement savings vehicles can be great ways to save for the future, but some of their mechanics are polar opposites. With dollars contributed or converted into a Roth IRA, you pay taxes before you put the money in the account. When you take the money out, it comes out income tax-free.<sup>1</sup> With a traditional IRA, in some cases you don't pay taxes at the time of the contribution. However, the IRS wants its share at some point, so you'll pay income tax on each dollar you take out of the account later.

Barring a few exceptions set forth by the IRS (e.g., disability, college), individuals must wait until they are at least age 59½ to take funds out of a traditional IRA without paying a penalty, and they have to begin taking annual "required minimum distributions" beginning at age 70½. With the Roth IRA, the principal in the account can be taken at any time income tax-free, and in certain circumstances, earnings can also be taken out with no penalties.<sup>1</sup> Better yet, you are not required to take money out of your Roth IRA during your lifetime.

### **Does a Roth Conversion Make Sense?**

The answer to this question is specific to your personal goals and financial situation. Many factors should be considered, including age, current and

expected future tax rate, availability of funds outside of the retirement account to pay the taxes, and estate planning goals. The answer is not always easy, but these examples may help give you some direction.

**Example #1:** Mary is age 25 and recently rolled her small 401(k) into an IRA after her transition to a new job. She is in a 15 percent tax bracket now, but expects that her income will increase over time.

A Roth conversion may be a great opportunity for Mary. She can pay taxes on the balance now at 15 percent and allow the earnings to accumulate in the account for the long term. When she takes the money out (and is in a higher tax bracket), the distributions may be income tax-free.<sup>1</sup> At the time of the conversion, it will be important for Mary to use money outside of the IRA to pay the tax bill.

**Example #2:** Dan is age 70 and receives a pension and Social Security. Based on conversations with his financial advisor, he does not need the funds in his traditional IRA to meet his retirement goals. He has grown children, and transferring his wealth to them is important.

This is another situation where a Roth conversion may be a very advantageous long-term strategy, as Dan can avoid having to take required distributions at age 70½. Additionally, paying the taxes now with non-IRA money will reduce his estate (for estate tax purposes). When Dan's kids eventually inherit this Roth IRA, they will have benefited from years and years of continued tax-free growth and tax-free distributions.

Should you convert your IRA to a Roth IRA? Maybe, maybe not. To find the right answer for you, consult with your financial advisor and CPA to see if this strategy helps you reach your long-term financial goals.

<sup>1</sup> Subject to specific Roth IRA withdrawal rules as mandated in IRS Publication 590.



**IRA INFO** Learn more about IRAs at a free community seminar on Tuesday, Jan. 25, from 2 to 3 p.m. in the auditorium in the Dr. Bobbie Bailey Tower at DeKalb Medical at North Decatur. Please RSVP to **404.501.7063**.

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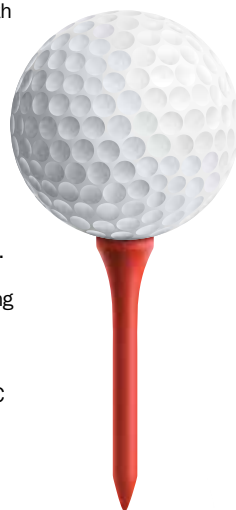


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**GOLF TOURNAMENT SWINGS \$93,000 FOR BREAST ULTRASOUND**

Over 175 golfers hit the links for the 16th Annual Charles B. Eberhart Memorial Golf Classic. They did more than enjoy the beautiful course at Peachtree Golf Club in Atlanta—they also raised more than \$93,000 to expand the capacity of breast ultrasound at DeKalb Medical at Hillandale. Dee Keeton, Foundation board member and director of patient relations and compliance at DeKalb Medical, served as chair of the event for her 16th year.





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# TECHNOLOGY PROVIDES *detail*

## ULTRASOUND KEY TOOL FOR EARLY DIAGNOSIS



It's a well-known fact that early detection is important in the treatment of breast disease.

"We are seeing an increase in the number of younger women with breast disease," says **April L. Speed, M.D.**, a breast specialist at DeKalb Medical. "Younger women have dense breast tissue and sometimes mammography alone cannot give us enough details to make an accurate diagnosis," she says. Breast ultrasound not only provides the extra details needed, but it does so in a comfortable, noninvasive way, she explains. "There is no radiation, just sound waves, so it is very safe."

Breast ultrasound is also a valuable tool that enables Speed and other doctors to perform nonsurgical biopsies, she says. "The ultrasound helps us identify the lump's exact location and size, which is essential when the lump is so small and cannot be felt," she says.

The funds raised by the Charles B. Eberhart Memorial Golf Classic will be used to purchase additional breast ultrasound equipment for the Hillandale campus. Increased community education and awareness of the importance of early detection of breast disease result in an increased demand for diagnostic tools like breast ultrasound, points out Speed. "We need the extra capacity to be able to schedule women even more quickly for ultrasound tests so they don't have to wait as long for an accurate diagnosis."

# IT'S BETTER TO *give*



## FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION BENEFIT FROM HUTCHINSON'S EXPERIENCE

It isn't often that the perfect job comes along—one that uses your talents, skills and experience while giving you an opportunity to do something you love. That is, however, how **Beverly Hutchinson, R.N.**, feels about her new position as liaison with the DeKalb Medical Foundation.

In her new role, Hutchinson provides concierge services to donors in the Foundation's newest program, Friends of the Foundation. "Donors to the Friends of the Foundation make a personal contribution to their community when they donate \$5,000 or more to the Foundation," says Hutchinson. Her services to members of the program include help with managing paperwork, telephone calls to friends or families, and being available to answer questions.

Hutchinson is uniquely suited for her role—having been a nurse at DeKalb Medical and an active Foundation donor. She worked in the Mother/Baby Department of the hospital, where she met her husband, William H. Hutchinson, M.D., an obstetrician/gynecologist. She has also served on the Foundation Board of Trustees since its inception in 1991 and was a charter member of the Nightingala Committee, on which she served for several years. Along with her husband, Hutchinson is also a member of the Foundation's Founders' Circle. Since joining the Foundation to launch the new program, she has become a member of PEACH (Partnering Employees Actively Committed to Healthcare), the DeKalb Medical employee-giving program.

Taking a position with the Foundation made sense to Hutchinson. She explains, "I'm happy to return to DeKalb Medical as an employee because it gives me a way to come back to nursing and work directly with patients, and to positively affect someone's life."

➤ For more information on Friends of the Foundation, visit our website at [www.dekalbmedical.org/foundation](http://www.dekalbmedical.org/foundation).

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## AUXILIARY PRESENTS \$42,000 TO FOUNDATION

Customers of the Dogwood Gift Shop in the lobby of DeKalb Medical at North Decatur have always appreciated the wide selection of snacks, gifts, cards and other items, but the value of the gift shop extends beyond what is sold on a day-to-day basis.

Proceeds from the shop, which is owned by the DeKalb Medical Auxiliary, are given to the Foundation to support activities that enhance patient care. This year the Auxiliary donated \$42,000 to the Foundation. Although there are employees who work in the gift shop, volunteers are responsible for staffing the shop, purchasing and receiving the shop's stock, and keeping the displays and shelves filled. In addition to the 18 volunteers who work in the gift shop, another 173 men and women volunteer their time at DeKalb Medical hospitals. Auxiliary volunteers donated 38,653 hours of their time in the past year, which is equivalent to \$657,101.

## DEKALB MEDICAL IS SMOKE-FREE— INSIDE AND OUT

In the interest of good health and healing, the campuses that house DeKalb Medical hospitals and professional office buildings are smoke-free—inside and out. Patients who smoke and need to be admitted to the hospital may be provided nicotine patches or other support during their hospitalization. For more information, visit the patient and visitor information section on DeKalb Medical's website at [www.dekalbmedical.org](http://www.dekalbmedical.org).

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