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**Symetra Financial Corporation is focused on Growing and Diversifying the company by Expanding its Product Portfolio and Broadening its Distribution Reach**

**Financial  
Life Insurance  
(NYSE: SYA)**

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**Margaret A. Meister  
Executive Vice President and CFO**

**BIO:**

Margaret Meister is executive vice president and chief financial officer of Symetra Financial Corporation and its insurance subsidiaries. She is responsible for leading the company's financial operations and strategy, and she serves as a liaison between the company and its board of directors, shareholders, rating agencies and analysts.

Meister joined the company in 1988 as an actuarial student. Since then, she has held several actuarial positions, including chief actuary. She was appointed Symetra's CFO in February 2006.

Meister is a Fellow of the Society of

Actuaries and a member of the American Academy of Actuaries. She graduated from Whitman College with a bachelor of arts degree in math.

**Company Profile:**

Symetra Financial Corporation (NYSE: SYA) is a diversified financial services company based in Bellevue, Wash. In business since 1957, Symetra provides employee benefits, annuities and life insurance through a national network of benefit consultants, financial institutions, and independent agents and advisors. For more information, visit [www.symetra.com](http://www.symetra.com).

**Interview conducted by:  
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor  
CEOCFOinterviews.com**

**CEOCFO: Ms. Meister, what is the grand vision at Symetra Financial today?**

**Ms. Meister:** Our vision at Symetra is to build a bigger, more diverse life insurance company. We want to be a growing and profitable enterprise that offers many great opportunities for our employees, our distributors and our customers. Keys to our success are offering a diversified product portfolio, expanding our distribution footprint, maintaining a strong financial foundation, and doing the right thing for our customers. We also want to enhance our visibility in the marketplace by building a trusted, distinctive brand.

**CEOCFO: What, if anything, has changed during the current economic situation; is there anything that Symetra Financial is doing differently?**

**Ms. Meister:** Clearly, this economic cycle has caused all companies in the financial sector to re-examine their business strategies and investment practices. It has validated for us that sticking to the fundamentals and investing in high-quality assets that match well with our liabilities is the way to go. This approach has served us well in the past, and it is something we will continue to do.

Given the low interest rate environment, we're directing more of our attention on non-interest-rate-sensitive products like life insurance, both in our group and individual life operations. We also are focusing on shorter-duration income annuity products.

**CEOCFO: Would you tell me about the different segments of Symetra?**

**Ms. Meister:** We have three operating divisions. Our first is our Group Division, which offers specialty-type of health insurance solutions to employers. With our medical stop-loss product, for example, we help the employer manage the healthcare costs by paying claims if they go above a certain dollar amount. Then we have our Retirement Division, which has two different pieces to it. We sell deferred annuities, which clients buy as a retirement savings vehicle. We also sell income annuities or immediate annuities that pay clients a monthly payment during their retirement so that they do not outlive their savings. Finally, we have our Life Division, which is where we sell life insurance to individuals — from term to universal life. We sell life insurance to corporations as well.

**CEOCFO: What segments experience the most growth?**

**Ms. Meister:** In the last two years, our Retirement Division has experienced the most growth. This stemmed from our work to expand distribution through retail banks and from the financial crisis, which caused many clients to invest their money in fixed annuities that offer guaranteed rates of return.

**CEOCFO: The financial advice and insurance industry sometimes evokes negative thought; how does Symetra as an organization ensure that the people representing you are really doing the right thing for their clients?**

**Ms. Meister:** That goes to the heart of our being. We think it's vitally important to build products that offer good consumer value. We also select and work closely with distribution partners that maintain high compliance standards and meet suitability requirements when they place a product with the client. Internally, we have our own review process, and we constantly train our salespeople as well as new employees to assess every sale appropriately. We want customers to benefit from the products they buy, but even more importantly, we want to ensure that they buy the right product for their needs and circumstances.

**CEOCFO: What is the geographic reach for Symetra Financial?**

**Ms. Meister:** Symetra is based in Bellevue, Wash., just outside of Seattle. We have offices all over the country, and our products are available nationwide.

**CEOCFO: Does the person buying at the other end know that it is a Symetra product, and do they care?**

**Ms. Meister:** Any customer who is considering the purchase of an insurance policy or retirement product

should care about the company that stands behind that product. Because we sell many of our products through banks, the customer's affinity is primarily with the bank. So, we send a welcome package introducing Symetra and making sure they know to call us if they ever have questions about the product.

**CEOCFO: Symetra Financial already has a diverse product offering, but are there any products or segments you would like to add?**

**Ms. Meister:** We do have quite a diverse product portfolio, and we are working to do even more. In our Group Division, we plan to significantly expand our group life and disability income insurance business. In

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the Retirement Division, we recently came out with a new fixed indexed annuity, and we're beginning to explore new variable annuity products. In the Life Division, our objective is to roll out a new product or enhancement each quarter between now and the end of 2012. Next up is our new cash-value universal life insurance product.

**CEOCFO: What is an example of something that you might have come up with in the last year or so?**

**Ms. Meister:** The best example is our new fixed indexed annuity called Symetra Edge Pro, which we sell primarily through banks. It has an innovative product design that came out of discussions with our key bank partners who asked for a solution offering clients the opportunity to earn higher

crediting rates than more traditional fixed products. While many fixed indexed annuities are tied to the S&P 500 Index, Symetra Edge Pro allows customers to diversify and allocate money to accounts where interest is based on the performance of both the S&P 500 Index and a commodities index.

**CEOCFO: What about community involvement for Symetra?**

**Ms. Meister:** Community involvement is a core value Symetra. In July, for example, we held our third annual Symetra Week of Service, which has grown in size and scope each year. Nearly 350 employees (35 percent of our headquarters workforce) volunteered on one of more than a dozen community projects across the Seattle area. We encourage employees to get involved in the community year 'round — it's important not only for the company, but for employees' own personal development and sense of contribution.

**CEOCFO: What is the financial picture like for Symetra today?**

**Ms. Meister:** Looking at our second quarter 2011 earnings, we had a solid quarter with earnings up 20% over the same period a year ago. All three of our divisions did well from a core underwriting perspective, and our investment portfolio continued to deliver good results. We have a strong financial foundation that helped us through the financial crisis and into our IPO in January 2010. We are producing solid results quarter after quarter while creating new opportunities, which is something not all companies have been able to do.

**CEOCFO: What has allowed for Symetra Financial's success?**

**Ms. Meister:** We are very prudent in our business approach, and we stick to what we know. We're also methodical in how we execute. We have an experienced board whose members really know our industry and care

about the company's strategy and direction. Finally, we work hard to make sure our employees understand what we're trying to do so that we're all pulling in the same direction.

**CEOCFO: Is the financial community paying attention?**

**Ms. Meister:** Yes, I would say they are paying attention. Our CEO Tom Marra talks about the "Symetra buzz" out in the industry. Between the high-

profile executives who have joined the company over the past year, our progress against our growth and diversification strategies, strong sales and our consistent performance during the financial crisis, we're definitely on the radar.

**CEOCFO: In closing, why should potential investors consider Symetra Financial today?**

**Ms. Meister:** Symetra is a well-run company with a seasoned executive team focused on building a premier insurance business. We have a history of successfully executing on our goals, and we are committed to creating value for shareholders, distributors, customers and employees. With our long-term strategy to Grow and Diversify, we are taking the right steps to become an even stronger company.

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