



# Connecticut's Chambers of Commerce Respond To Health Care Cost Crisis

*Businesses have demanded a response to huge premium increases. Meetings at Chambers are being held across the state. A statewide survey is being fielded.*

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT, UNITED STATES, October 3, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- HARTFORD: Connecticut Chamber of Commerce executives and their health insurance marketing partner the Chamber Insurance Trust are responding to the healthcare cost crisis by overhauling their benefit programs to address the escalating costs to Connecticut businesses.

There are more than 65 Chambers in Connecticut serving tens of thousands of members, they operate six existing regional Chamber Benefits Centers across the state.

Informational events are being rolled out at Chambers throughout the state and key Chamber members are being designated as Chamber Healthcare Navigators. Among the upcoming meetings are Middlesex Chamber, October 11, Danbury October 18, Norwalk October 19, New Haven is organizing a Business Summit at the Long Wharf Theater later in the month, TBA.

The first meeting was held on September 6, at the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Candice Corcione, Executive Director of the Tolland County Chamber helped organize the multi-chamber event.

Corcione, said, "businesses in our 13 communities are practically shouting from the rooftops, about the increasing healthcare costs. As a Chamber executive my number one responsibility is to help our region's companies address their problems. Sometimes we're advocating for them at the State Capitol or organizing events to help get more business, but the rising costs of healthcare have become a top priority."

The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that the cost per employee in Connecticut averaged more than \$6,545 in 2016, the fifth highest in the Continental US, trailing only New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire and rates are increasing.

The Connecticut Department of Insurance has authorized increases for 2018 of as much as 31.7% for the individual market. Anthem Blue Cross/ Blue Shield, Connecticut's largest insurer, was authorized to increase rates that average more than 25% for the the under 50 employee market.

Nearly all of Connecticut's major health insurers have posted double digit rate increases.

The Chamber executives are launching The Connecticut Healthcare Response Survey, to get extensive business feedback and data from every corner and company segment across Connecticut.

JoAnn Ryan, president of Connecticut's Chambers of Commerce Leadership Council, and president of the Northwest Chamber of Commerce, in Torrington said, "from Danbury to Danielson, members are telling Chamber leaders that increasing healthcare costs are strangling their businesses.

The Survey will provide the data we need to better educate ourselves and our board members, on the immediate needs of Connecticut companies.”

Ryan added, “the Chambers have used our combined member power, working with our healthcare marketing partner the Chamber Insurance Trust [CIT] of Orange, run by Steve Glick to provide access to quality and affordable health plans for more than two decades. Today we are especially concerned that our middle market companies, with 20 to 500 employees have lost control of their ability to contain costs.”

CIT’s CEO Steve Glick said, “most of the media and political attention has been about the Affordable Care Act and the individual market. While we can argue the cause, there is no doubt about what is happening in the marketplace and what the increases mean to Connecticut companies.”

Glick added, “the Federal and State governments can help, however, we are not waiting. We’re innovating, we’ve researched, negotiated with providers and are creating new and exclusive solutions offered only through Connecticut’s Chambers. For most companies, especially those with 10-20 employees and Connecticut’s middle market, the bottom line, is long term cost control, transparency, and shared risk with other quality companies.

Companies need to pay less for the insurance plan’s administration, marketing and profits, they need to reduce claims through management and wellness, better manage the drug benefit and a have a health plan designed for their unique company. Managing your healthcare costs, once a year at rate renewal, is over.”

Aaron Glick, Executive Vice President, in-house Counsel for CIT evaluated the issues for Connecticut’s middle-market companies. Glick explained, “corporate headquarters’ departures have grabbed the news but, Connecticut was recently ranked #17 in middle market companies, they are the drivers and innovators, the future of Connecticut. For these companies, healthcare costs have moved near the top of the list of management issues.”

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