

SAVE THE DATE

**Small
Business
Access to
Capital
Webinar
October
28,
2011
11:00 a.m.**

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LOSS OF MATERNITY BENEFITS MAY MEAN PAYING BIG FOR YOUR BUNDLE

by Antonio Paulo Pinto

If you've ever tried to purchase individual healthcare coverage for yourself, the shock you experienced when confronted with the cost may be enough to send you to the emergency room. Believe it or not, finding comprehensive coverage for a family is even more traumatic. Many individuals, including the self-employed, unemployed, part-time employees, and small business owners have very few affordable options. One of the most disturbing trends in healthcare is the progressive disappearance of maternity benefits from individual health plans. For most health plans in Connecticut, natural child-birth is not considered a covered benefit. Medically complicated pregnancies are generally covered. Right now in Connecticut, two insurance companies each offer only one individual HMO plan that covers maternity, (including

natural child-birth) among their many plan options. One of the plans, expected



to disappear soon, is extremely expensive; and the other option has a \$10,000 up-front family deductible that applies to all expenses. The only other place an individual can purchase a health plan that covers maternity is through one of the State of Connecticut Medicaid programs; Husky or Charter Oak. With the high unemployment rate and reasonable income

guidelines, these programs are viable alternatives for many individuals. One big issue however is the inability to quickly and conveniently access care. The good news is maternity is covered.

One possible solution would be the establishment of a Connecticut healthcare exchange. The exchange could allow individuals and sole-proprietors to enroll in a guaranteed issue employer group health plan, with no exclusions for pre-existing conditions. Otherwise, it looks like in the very near future unless a person qualifies for Medicaid; or can afford a very expensive guaranteed issue employer plan as a sole-proprietor, they should plan on spending about \$20,000 to have a child.



*Antonio Paulo Pinto is a Certified Insurance Consultant with considerable experience in individual and small group (under 50) health insurance markets. He is the author of *The Health Insurance Handbook: Understanding and Shopping for Health Insurance*.*

SBHC Board Member Named to Sustinet Healthcare Cabinet

SBHC Board Member Linda St. Peter was named to the Sustinet Healthcare Cabinet. The Healthcare Cabinet advises the Malloy administration regarding implementation of healthcare reform and health system changes in Connecticut. It operates under the direction of Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman in the Office of Healthcare Reform and Innovation.



Ms. St. Peter will serve a 5-year term as the Small Business Representative. She is the former president of the Connecticut Association of Realtors, and a licensed realtor with more than 20 years experience as owner of IBIS Commercial Investment Real Estate. The Healthcare Cabinet's next meetings are: November 10, and December 8, 2011. For locations check <http://www.healthreform.ct.gov/ohri/cwp/view.asp?a=2742&q=333484>

*It is not who
is right, but
what is right,
that is of
importance.*

Thomas Hasley

Speaker Calls Healthcare Workgroup

House Speaker Christopher Donovan will convene the second meeting of the Working Group on Small Business Healthcare on October 24, 2011. The group will be led by State Representative and Insurance Committee Chair, Robert Megna.

Donovan said health care costs are "among the most

daunting obstacles for entrepreneurs", and that "some can't attract and retain talented employees because health insurance is unaffordable". Megna agreed, stating, "Health care costs are a major hurdle to job growth."

The Working Group is charged with making legislative recommendations on

how to meet the health insurance needs of the small business workforce.

The Group consists of 16 small business owners and 9 legislators. The meeting is open to the public and will be held at 11:00 a.m. in Room 1D of the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford.

Health Insurance Exchange Board Watch

SBHC and other healthcare advocates continue to push for more representation of consumers, including small business owners on the Health Insurance Exchange Board. Currently the 14 member Board, has no small businesses or individuals seated. Many of the Board's members are current or former insurance executives. That fact is

puzzling to many since the Exchange Board was established to provide safeguards for small businesses and individuals.

The Board's purpose is to set up mechanisms through which individuals and small businesses can purchase healthcare. Several healthcare advocates have submitted Freedom of In-

formation Act (FOIA) requests to uncover the process by which the Board's members were appointed. If you want small business to have its say, about how its needs should be met, write your legislator. Contact information for all legislators can be found at: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/CGAFindLeg.asp>.



Small Biz Healthcare Tax Credit Deadline: 10/17



Getty

If you own a small business, federal healthcare reform may make it easier to get better healthcare for yourself and your

employees. With the deadline for last year's credits just days away, savvy business owners are benefitting from changes that give small businesses tax incentives for providing healthcare to their workers.

According to Andrew Lattimer, CPA and a partner with the accounting firm Blum Shapiro, October 17, 2011 is the deadline to file for the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit if health care insurance was provided to employees during 2010. The

credit, is part of the Affordable Care Act that provides tax credits for as much as 35 percent of health insurance costs. To get the maximum benefit, companies must have fewer than 25 employees, provide health coverage for workers, and pay for at least 50 percent of the premium

For more information check with your tax professional, the Internal Revenue Service, or go to : <http://www.hartfordbusiness.com/news20745.html?Type=search>

Try to learn something about everything and everything about something.

Thomas Huxley

ECHN Ends Contract with Two Health Plans

Effective October 15, 2011, the Eastern Connecticut Health Network will terminate its contract with United Healthcare and Oxford Health Plans, as reported in the *Hartford Business Journal* on September 6, 2011.

All patients with United or Oxford commercial insurance, including the Golden Rule and Definity Plans will be affected.

Right now it is unclear how ECHN patients will be impacted. <http://www.hartfordbusiness.com/news20325.html?Type=search>.

ECHN said in a written statement that "a rough economy and pressures on healthcare providers (including below market reimbursement rates from commercial insurers, and reduced

reimbursements by Medicare and Medicaid) is putting pressure on the organization's ability to provide high quality patient care"

(<http://www.hartfordbusiness.com/news20325.html?Type=search>).

SBHC Access to Capital Webinar October 28th

Small Business for a Healthy Connecticut (SBHC) and Small Business Majority (SBM) are teaming up again to offer insightful information about gaining business financing. SBM is a national small business advocacy group founded and run by small business owners who focus on solving some of the biggest problems facing small busi-

nesses today. In addition to access and the high cost of healthcare, access to capital remains a constant challenge for small business owners.

The webinar scheduled for October 28, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. will highlight Connecticut based resources available for small business owners.

The session will also feature statewide programs, a U.S. Treasury update on small business banking, tips for a small business owner to receive a loan, SBA programs, as well as a question and answer period. Check the website sbhct.org and email notices or call 203-631-5186 for further details.





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**Check in and check up on Connecticut
Healthcare!**

Small Business for a Healthy Connecticut (SBHC) is a network of Connecticut small businesses that have come together to provide an independent voice for quality healthcare in Connecticut.

SBHC is committed to building a strong Connecticut by supporting business practices that sustain the health of businesses, individuals, and vibrant communities. Small Business for a Healthy Connecticut supports access to affordable comprehensive healthcare.

SBHC partners with businesses, individuals, non-profits and groups that care about health, viable small businesses, vibrant communities, and a strong economy. Our goal is to ensure that all of Connecticut is healthy.

www.sbhct.org

Come Join SBHC Healthcare Advocates at the State Capitol



Left to right: Kevin Galvin, James Stirling, Linda St. Peter, Gene Fercodini, and Robert Kennedy following a successful meeting with legislators. If you are interested in taking a stand for access to affordable, comprehensive healthcare, or telling your personal or small business healthcare story, call us: 203-631-5186.