

CONNECTIONS

Education News From Northeastern Connecticut

EASTCONN, 10 Partners Form Health Insurance Cooperative

In a historic move in the region and in direct response to changes in state law, five northeastern Connecticut school districts and five municipalities have partnered with EASTCONN to form the area's first health insurance cooperative, aimed at saving taxpayers money.

"EASTCONN has been working with municipalities, school districts, and insurance carriers -- in particular, Cigna -- to hammer out the details of this insurance cooperative for the last two years," said John Baskowski, EASTCONN's chief financial officer.

"The goal is to reduce health insurance costs for all parties, while increasing local decision-making related to the provision of employee health benefits," Baskowski said.



New Health Insurance Cooperative Board members, following the inaugural meeting, May 2nd. Their names are listed on page 2.

At a meeting on Wednesday, May 2, 2012, at EASTCONN's Hampton Conference Center, founding members from the municipalities and school districts of Coventry, Griswold, Plainfield, Putnam and Tolland, in addition to EASTCONN, met to form the Eastern Connecticut Regional Health Insurance Cooperative, officially creating the 11-member partnership.

An executive board and alternates were also elected. By-laws had been previously accepted. Composed of a representative from each member town and school district, the board will guide the cooperative as it moves forward. Baskowski said that EASTCONN will provide staffing for the cooperative, whose

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new insurance policy period will take effect on July 1, 2012.

Nearly two years ago, following the passage of Connecticut Public Act 10-174, which allowed school districts and municipalities to jointly purchase employee health insurance, EASTCONN invited representatives from across northeastern Connecticut to explore the possibility of forming a health insurance partnership. Talks have been ongoing since that time.

After the cooperative's first official meeting on Wednesday, new executive board members shared their thoughts.

"It's been exciting to move forward as the first cooperative of this kind in the state and I hope this will result in reduced insurance costs for both towns and school districts," said Chairman Steve Werbner, who is also Tolland's Town Manager.

Executive board member William Hull, Putnam Superintendent of Schools, added, "It's a great start. Hopefully, it's something that will save towns money and bring the region together collaboratively to help all our employees."

"This is an exciting time because, as the result of a change in state law two years ago, we are now able to take advantage of this law," said William Guzman, Tolland Superintendent of Schools, who is also an executive board member.

Board member John Elsesser, Town Manager of Coventry, said, "Eastern Connecticut has always been innovative and has always worked collaboratively to come up with great solutions. We take pride in having taken this collaborative approach to health insurance."

The cooperative's executive board will meet in the coming months to further develop operating procedures and address other details, Baskowski said.

For more information, contact EASTCONN CFO John Baskowski at 860-455-0707, or at jbaskowski@eastconn.org.

Health Insurance Board Photo IDs from page 1:

Front row, l to r: Holly McCalla, Griswold Public Schools Business Manager; Kelly Vachon, Plainfield Town Finance Director; Executive Board Chairman Steve Werbner, Tolland Town Manager; William Hull, Superintendent Putnam Public Schools; and Erik Christensen, Griswold Town Finance Director. Back row, l to r: William Guzman, Superintendent Tolland Public Schools; John Elsesser, Coventry Town Manager; alternate Beth Bauer, Coventry Town Finance Director; Doug Cutler, Putnam Town Administrator; alternate Robert Carroll, Coventry Public Schools Finance Director; Ronald Lussier, Plainfield Public Schools Finance Director; and John Baskowski, EASTCONN Chief Financial Officer. Missing from photo: Coventry Superintendent Dave Petrone.