

## **SustiNet**

SustiNet is a plan to provide affordable, comprehensive health coverage for every CT resident, reduce the costs of care for virtually all residents, promote health care quality, and improve the public's health. SustiNet passed into state law in 2009.

SustiNet began as an initiative of the Universal Health Care Foundation of CT. The Foundation spent two years from 2007 through 2009 studying the problem of the uninsured and CT's health care landscape. The Foundation consulted with experts, consumers, providers, payers, unions, small businesses, faith-based groups to assess the need and develop the most feasible solution for CT's health care environment.

In the 2009 legislative session, the plan was submitted to the legislature and passed both Houses of the General Assembly. Governor Rell vetoed the bill, but in July the General Assembly overrode her veto and the SustiNet Plan became law (PA 09-148).

For health coverage, the bill combines the purchasing power of all the states' health care purchasing pools – Medicaid, SAGA, HUSKY, Charter Oak and the state employee plan – to create the largest pool in the state, potentially covering 800,000 state residents. The pool will be self-insured, but will contract with one or more companies to administer the benefits. This pool would eventually be used to offer coverage to small businesses, nonprofits and the uninsured/underinsured. SustiNet would be an option available to CT residents, with premiums on a sliding fee scale based on income. Enrollment in SustiNet will be voluntary.

To counter concerns that focusing only on expanding coverage is not financially sustainable, SustiNet simultaneously creates planning processes to ensure that every CT resident has access to a patient-centered medical home, to expand access to preventive care, to encourage adoption of health information technology, and to improve health care quality.

### **What is happening with SustiNet now?**

A nine member SustiNet Board of Directors was appointed and has been meeting since the fall of 2009. Eight task forces and advisory committees have also been meeting since the fall and have submitted final recommendations. The committees are addressing patient-centered medical homes, health disparities, health information technology, preventive health care, health care quality and providers, obesity prevention, tobacco and smoking cessation, and the health care workforce. Over 160 volunteers have been participating in the process in an open, transparent, and public process.

### **How does SustiNet fit into national reform?**

SustiNet fits extremely well into the national health reform act passed in March 2010. The SustiNet Board commissioned and approved a report by the Urban Institute at the end of May detailing how national reform's new resources and opportunities can support SustiNet. Early estimates of the costs for implementation of SustiNet are now obsolete, given significant new federal funding opportunities. The SustiNet planning process has put CT in ahead in planning for national health reform.

Ellen Andrews  
Executive Director  
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Sources:

PA 09-148, An Act Concerning the Establishment of the Sustinet Plan

[http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill\\_num=6600&which\\_year=2009&SUBMIT1.x=11&SUBMIT1.y=12](http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=6600&which_year=2009&SUBMIT1.x=11&SUBMIT1.y=12)

Universal Health Care Foundation of CT

<http://www.universalhealthct.org/>

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<http://www.ct.gov/sustinet/site/default.asp>