



Pass the Health Insurance Exchange fix bill NOW

Why getting the Exchange right matters for Connecticut

In 2014, under national health reform, every state resident will be required to have health insurance. The individual mandate only works if there is a fair and open health insurance marketplace – the CT Health Insurance Exchange. The Exchange will cover one in ten Connecticut residents. 140,000 people eligible for federal subsidies will have to purchase coverage in the exchange. The Board now making critical operational decisions is dominated by insurance company representatives and, contrary to federal regulations, has no voting consumer members. We need an independent, credible Exchange making the best decisions for consumers and small businesses, not politically powerful interests.

Why do we need to fix the Exchange now?

The Board is right now hiring and interviewing for the CEO and eight other senior staff positions. The Board's consultant has recommended turning the small business exchange over to CBIA. CBIA's Health Connections offerings are not affordable and lack the value small businesses need. CBIA is closely tied to the insurance industry and opposed health reform. We need a public, transparent alternative to CBIA to foster competition. Turning the Exchange over to vested interests that opposed reform would guarantee failure. These and other decisions being made now will lock in the Exchange's direction for the future.

Public trust in the Exchange is critical

People forced to buy insurance have to believe that they aren't wasting their money; that they aren't paying for more empty coverage. If the public doesn't trust the integrity of the Exchange, more people will "choose" to pay the penalty, remain uninsured and end up in the publicly-funded safety net. Vested interests undermine public trust and have no place in the Exchange.

Critical decisions must be independent

The Board must develop standards for which insurance plans get into the Exchange including quality, administrative cost limits, limits on profits, regulation of marketing materials, transparency, provider panels, etc. The Exchange must negotiate prices and benefits on behalf of consumers and small businesses. It is critical to get public education right. Insurance has been very complex and the public is very skeptical that any insurance is going to be there when they need it. Monitoring systems must be robust and able to detect deceptions that happen in the real world.

We must get this right. Pass the Health Insurance Exchange Bill NOW.