



## Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange Strategy Committee Regular Meeting

Thursday, February 11, 2021  
Remote Meeting

### **Members Present:**

Steven Hernandez; Grant Ritter; Paul Philpott; Victoria Veltri; Paul Lombardo; Cecelia Woods

### **Other Participants:**

AHCT Staff: James Michel; John Carbone; Daryl Jones; Susan Rich-Bye; Marcin Olechowski

#### **I. Call to Order**

The Meeting of the Strategy Committee was called to order at 1:00 p.m. Roll call for attendance was taken.

#### **II. Public Comment**

No public comment.

#### **III. Votes**

Susan Rich-Bye, Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs, reviewed the need to elect a Presiding Officer. A motion was requested to elect Steven Hernandez as a Presiding Officer in the absence of a Chair. Motion was made by Victoria Veltri and seconded by Paul Philpott. Roll call vote was ordered. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Presiding Officer, Steven Hernandez, requested a motion to approve the December 1, 2016 Strategy Committee Draft Meeting Minutes. Motion was made by Cecilia Woods and seconded by Victoria Veltri. Grant Ritter and Paul Lombardo abstained. **Motion passed.**

Ms. Rich-Bye explained the need to elect a chair of the Strategy Committee. A motion was requested to appoint Steven Hernandez as the Chair of the Strategy Committee. Motion was made by Victoria Veltri and seconded by Paul Philpott. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Hernandez thanked the Committee members in entrusting him with the role of Chair. Chair Hernandez stressed that it is a pivotal time in the strategic life of Access Health CT (AHCT) given the circumstances pertaining to policy changes as well as the COVID-19 pandemic that affected many areas of our lives. Chair Hernandez also emphasized that health disparities and inequities have been exacerbated by the pandemic and stressed that it is very important that more people have access to affordable healthcare coverage.

#### **IV. Strategic Initiatives**

James Michel, Chief Executive Officer, introduced the Strategic Initiatives topic. He briefly discussed two legislative proposals that are being considered at the Connecticut General Assembly that may have strategic implications for AHCT. Their progress through the legislative process is monitored closely.

John Carbone, Director of SHOP and Product Development, presented the small business initiatives that are currently being explored. Mr. Carbone noted that over the past 18 months, the small business brand has been promoted more extensively and pointed out that SHOP would like to be a concierge for the entire small business marketplace so that most of the services can be acquired in one place. Mr. Carbone enumerated those potential products which include Dental, Vision, Term Life Insurance, Short-Term Disability as well as Long-Term Disability Insurance. Mr. Carbone added that other ancillary products are also under consideration and they include group Medicare Products, Payroll Service Providers, Flexible Spending Accounts, Health Reimbursement Accounts and Gap Coverage Plans. Mr. Carbone noted that a broker and employer survey will be sent out to determine which products are most attractive to the market. Mr. Michel added that the aim is to make it easier for small businesses to purchase a suite of products that they need to support their small businesses. Mr. Carbone indicated that a significant drop in SHOP membership occurred when the pandemic started and added that it prompted the organization to take a much more proactive approach by reaching out to small employers and brokers with possible solutions such as providing them with information about the payroll protection program among other useful information. Mr. Carbone stressed that SHOP has become an advocate for them in the time of need. Mr. Carbone added that as a result of the outreach to small businesses that initially were not enrolled in SHOP, the program has grown since many of them became interested in the services provided by SHOP. Promotional kits were distributed in large numbers to prospective clients. Chair Hernandez inquired about the major purpose of the survey whether it is to learn about interest in expanding offerings or to learn about ways to increase awareness of SHOP offerings. Mr. Carbone noted that it is both and stressed that SHOP wanted to assess what is most important to them at this point and build on that premise.

#### **V. Strategic Initiatives**

Anthony Crowe, Chief Operating Officer, discussed Strategic Initiatives. Mr. Crowe stated that AHCT signaled to the state stakeholders its willingness to help with the use of the call center to facilitate vaccination appointments for the residents of Connecticut. Mr. Crowe pointed out that this idea was well-received, but at this point AHCT call center will not be utilized for that purpose. Mr. Crowe stated that various undertakings are taking place in order to promote the importance of vaccinations and emphasized that AHCT will assist in any way possible to help the state stakeholders. Mr. Michel said that many Connecticut residents are suffering due to COVID-19 and AHCT wants people to know where to get vaccinated and added that there are urban communities that are hard to communicate with that will be one of the outreach focuses for individuals to obtain vaccination. Mr. Philpott suggested that AHCT should reach out to its Qualified Health Plan (QHP) customers with that information as well. Mr. Michel stated that AHCT is in constant contact with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and any outreach that takes place, will be agreed upon with DPH. Discussion ensued around possible ways of assisting Connecticut residents in obtaining correct vaccination information.

Mr. Crowe went also described AHCT's relationship with the Connecticut Department of Labor (DOL) in terms of the help for those individuals who become unemployed and are in need of medical coverage

options. Chair Hernandez thanked AHCT for its work, but especially for the Health Disparities Study that will help in assisting those in need in obtaining affordable healthcare coverage.

**VI. Adjournment**

Chair Steven Hernandez requested a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Paul Philpott and seconded by Victoria Veltri. Roll call vote was taken. **Motion passed unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.