

"Approximately 80 percent of the people who are uninsured are either employed or members of a family or household in which someone is employed. It's a common misconception that many of the uninsured are not working."

- Dr. John Z. Ayanian, member of the Institute of Medicine Committee on the Consequences of Uninsurance, Harvard physician and noted researcher.

Healthy Biz News

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Health Care: A Growth Industry

By Steve Sasala

Health care in the Greater Waterbury region is big business. It is the third largest industry sector in the region and is growing. Over 14 percent of the region's jobs are in health care, just behind retail and services (15 percent) and manufacturing (20 percent).

Not only are we fortunate to have two hospitals, a regional cancer center and now a regional heart center, but the region is home to numerous health care professional offices as well as a number of independent and assisted-care communities. Our various health care businesses contribute almost \$500 million to the region's economy annually.

Two years ago, as the Waterbury Regional Chamber was reassessing its structure and delivery systems to the community, the Chamber and a number of traditional health providers were asked to participate in the Mayor's Health City Initiative. We worked diligently to produce a successful first event under the auspices of this initiative. Shortly thereafter we realized that to sustain our impact we needed to

institutionalize our efforts. And thus, with help from the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, was born the Health Care Council.

The Health Care Council (HCC) operates with a set of by-laws. It has officers who are elected on an annual basis. At its beginning the HCC was staff driven, but has matured into a volunteer-driven effort. Now Chamber staff is responsible for the overall operation of the HCC.

The mission of the Health Care Council is:

- To provide health care resources and information to employers, employees, individuals and health care professionals;
- To provide networking opportunities for members and prospective members;
- To educate professionals within the health care industry;
- To act as a resource for individuals and companies new to the industry or to the region; and
- To identify issues and establish a health care legislative agenda for presentation to the Public Policy Committee of the Waterbury Regional Chamber.

The HCC meets ten months out of the year. From September through May the Council conducts monthly meetings that are a combination of networking, business and guest speakers. In June the Council hosts its Regional Health Care Breakfast. Nominal admission fees are charged for these events.

Over the past year membership in the HCC has grown to over 100 members. We have also created a Health Care Access Council, a subset of the HCC, and have recruited additional members, such as Elliott Johnson of the Greater Waterbury Black Business Association, to serve on it. We hope

Continued on back

Steve Sasala is the President and CEO of the Waterbury Regional Chamber.



The Importance of Networking

By Karen Hinds

Inadequate or no health care hits at the heart of many proud working American families. The many systems are frustrating, complex, and can leave the most resourceful person feeling depleted and shut out.

With that in mind it's imperative for organizations to engage in a multifaceted approach to reach even the most seemingly unreachable person. It can not be done alone. By teaming up, organizations can gain the trust of people who may not feel comfortable sharing their concerns with a new organization, can have access to a larger population, and can become more familiar with local business and political leaders. The Greater Waterbury Black Business

Association has made it a priority to network with a variety of organizations.

We have:

- Hosted informational sessions with Staywell Health Center,
- Kicked off our grant cycle with the Spanish American Merchants Association,
- Collaborated with an insurance agency to bring our members the latest health care options available,
- Brought our discussion forum into a local church,
- Participated in the local YMCA health community day, and
- Used our monthly networking Melanin Sunset events as a vehicle to reach out to the community.

We plan to:

- Team up with the Waterbury Regional Chamber to host a major health education event for businesses in the area.

Karen Hinds is the Health Care Project Manager of the Greater Waterbury Black Business Association.

www.workplacesuccess.com



SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH CARE NETWORK

Bridgeport Regional Business
Council
www.brbc.org

Business Council of Fairfield
County
www.sacia.org

Chamber of Commerce of
Eastern Connecticut
www.chamberect.com

Foundation of Greater New
Haven Chamber of Commerce
www.newhavenchamber.com

Grand Avenue Village
Association
www.grandnewhaven.com

Greater Bristol Chamber of
Commerce, Inc.
<http://www.bristol-chamber.org/>

Greater New Haven Business
and Professional Association
(203) 562-2193

Greater Waterbury Black
Business Association
(203) 591-1724

National Association of Women
Business Owners -- CT
www.nawboct.org

Spanish American Merchants
Association
www.samact.org

Waterbury Regional Chamber of
Commerce
www.waterburychamber.org



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FOUNDATION
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290 Pratt ST
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(203) 639-0550
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Message from Foundation President

Dear Small Business Leader,

We've been working smart and hard at the Foundation to find solutions to our state's health care crisis; solutions that will work for everyone. And you – small business owners – are among our most important allies in this effort. Not only do you drive our local economy but you also comprise our family, friends and neighbors. Universal health care is possible and we intend to achieve it with you.

We are pleased to see the great strides that members of our Small Business Health Care Network have been taking this past year. Many health care councils have been created and their plans to support small businesses are being implemented. Members of our Network are holding health forums in communities across the state to facilitate the exchange of critical

information so that businesses can make good decisions.

Other activities have included research, both formal and informal. Last month, with the help of the associations, councils and chambers, we sent out surveys about employer-sponsored health insurance to over 11,000 small businesses across the state. We look forward to compiling the results, analyzing the data, and getting the findings into your hands.

We expect the survey report to shed more light on the challenges small businesses face because of rising health care costs. The report will also enable us to better assist small businesses as they develop strategies to meet their business needs.

This coming year promises to bring many exciting events. This month

we will release our much anticipated mapping study that examines Connecticut's health spending and insurance coverage. In March, we will launch a new Web site that will provide you with greater access to timely information and allow you to communicate more effectively with other business owners on health care issues.

We look forward to collaborating with you to find ways to make access to quality, affordable health care available to small businesses and the rest of the state.

Sincerely,
Juan A. Figueroa



Health Care: A Growth Industry, cont.

to continue our growth of the HCC by offering programming that continues to raise awareness about the importance of health care for the individual, how it affects the workplace and why health care is an integral part of the region's business.

If you're a health care professional in the Waterbury region you really ought to think about getting involved in the HCC. If you're in

business and looking for some opportunities to expand your markets perhaps you should consider membership in not only the Chamber but also the HCC. Please visit our website at www.waterburychamber.com or call us directly at 203-757-0701.

Your chamber, council or association might have a health care council. Give them a call!

Trade Show Booth

Are you attending a trade show where you would like to educate others about access to health care, the challenges facing small business owners, or universal health care? Would you like to present a trade show booth focused on these issues? Starting in March you can!

The Universal Health Care Foundation is creating a trade show booth that will help you educate others about the challenges facing our current health care system and possible solutions for the future. It will consist of three quick-view screens, a literature stand, a podium, and various publications on health care coverage. Please contact Joe Picoraro (jpacoraro@universalhealthct.org) if you're interested in presenting the booth.

Small Business Survey

The Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut is conducting a statewide survey of small business owners. With your help we hope to better inform the solutions to our health care crisis. The survey is anonymous and easy to complete and your answers will be confidential. Please enable us to help your council, chamber, and/or association serve you better. The survey can be completed online at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=836581630407> until February 28. Thank you.

1st Issue

This is the first issue of *Healthy Biz News*. It is a bi-monthly newsletter by the Small Business Health Care Network for small business owners in Connecticut. It is a vehicle to communicate healthcare concerns and progress within the small business community. If you have questions or comments or would like to contribute an article please contact Joe Picoraro, (203) 639-0550 ext 310 or jpacoraro@universalhealthct.org. Thanks!

Upcoming Events

Waterbury Regional Chamber
"Ancient Wisdom -
Modern Choices"
Healing through Acupuncture,
Exercise and Nutrition
speaker Dr. Peter Zilahy
February 22, 2006, 7:45 - 9:30 a.m.
Courttyard by Marriott in
Waterbury
\$10 members/\$15 non-members

"Communicating Across
The Generations"
speaker Jean Cherni
March 22, 2006, 7:45 - 9:30 a.m.
\$10 members/\$15 non-members

Greater Bristol Chamber
Eggs N Issues – forum on
controlling costs and providing
access to small businesses
April 12th at 8:00 A.M at the
Clarion Hotel in Bristol
\$15 members or non-members