

CONNECTIONS

Education News From Northeastern Connecticut



Northeastern Connecticut leaders discussed health insurance collaboratives during a recent information session. Left to right, RHAM Superintendent Robert Siminski; Tolland Superintendent William D. Guzman, Esq.; EASTCONN Executive Director Paula M. Colen; and Woodstock Superintendent Frank Baran.

40 Area Leaders Meet To Explore Health Insurance Collaborative

Forty representatives from northeastern Connecticut's municipalities, boards of education and school districts gathered at EASTCONN Hampton on February 28th to learn more about creating a regional health-care insurance collaborative.

EASTCONN hosted the information session, which featured experts from Milliman, Inc., an actuarial consulting firm, and a presentation by Plainfield Superintendent of Schools Kenneth Di Pietro, who has experience with health-care collaboratives in Rhode Island.

Connecticut recently passed legislation that allows regional "pooling" for school and municipal health-care costs.

"Not only would creating a collaborative in this region allow opportunities for collective-bargaining-power and savings...it would also allow us to maintain our local identities and local control," said Di Pietro, who gave a dynamic presentation on the advantages of health-care collaboratives.

"Just by coming to the table to explore the options, you become more knowledgeable about what's out there," Di Pietro said. "Collaboratives empower you to negotiate the best deal," he told the group. "That way, each of us is protected by the All."

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Forty community and school leaders discussed the pros and cons of creating a health-insurance collaborative in northeastern Connecticut during a meeting at EASTCONN's Hampton offices.

Before moving to Plainfield last fall, Di Pietro was superintendent of schools in Rhode Island's Coventry Public Schools, where health insurance collaboratives have been in use for years.

Milliman representatives and Di Pietro touched on topics like the potential administrative structure of a collaborative, as well as collaborative strategies and the benefits of joining a collaborative. Those present asked a variety of questions.

"I thought this was great," said RHAM Superintendent Robert Siminski after the information session ended. "We've been advocating for this for a while. It's very exciting to see this getting off the ground, but there's a lot of work to be done. Now we just have to sit down and do it."

Thirty [30] representatives from 28 towns and/or school districts have volunteered to help EASTCONN explore next steps for creating a regional health-care collaborative. Among the 30 volunteers are superintendents, boards of education members, fiscal managers, finance directors, business administrators, boards of finance representatives and town managers.

According to EASTCONN Executive Director Paula M. Colen, volunteers will meet in the next few weeks to explore the specifics that would be involved in creating a health-care collaborative. Participants will be notified once the date is set.

For more information or to participate in next steps, contact EASTCONN's Paula M. Colen at 860-455-1505, or e-mail her at pcolen@eastconn.org.