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Governor Rell Names Cristine Vogel Special Advisor For Health Care Reform

Will Oversee Policy and Implementation of Federal Health Care Reforms

Governor M. Jodi Rell today announced that Department of Public Health Deputy Commissioner Cristine Vogel has been named Special Advisor to the Governor on Health Care Reform to oversee the integration of federal health care reform initiatives in Connecticut and to help implement the strategies of the Governor's Health Care Reform Cabinet.

Vogel, of Bethlehem, has been overseeing the Office of Health Care Access (OHCA) within the state Department of Public Health (DPH). She became a deputy commissioner when OCHA was merged into the Department of Public Health by the Legislature in 2009. Her new appointment as special advisor becomes effective July 23. Vogel will step down from overseeing the day-to-day operations at OHCA, with Kim Martone, an 18-year OHCA employee taking over that role.

"The federal health care reform bill is a vast, complex piece of legislation that will directly affect thousands of people and translate into millions of dollars for the state. It is essential we manage it correctly and capably and Cristine Vogel has the experience and professionalism to help oversee the process," Governor Rell said. "Her thorough approach combined with her extensive knowledge of the health care field and strong consumer advocacy will help ensure that Connecticut leverage all opportunities and available funding under the new federal reforms."

Vogel is also the chairwoman of the Governor's Health Care Reform Cabinet, created shortly after the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) became law. The goals of the Cabinet, which also includes officials from state agencies that administer health programs, include:

- Creating a consumer-friendly health insurance purchasing exchange;
- Reviewing industry reforms to make sure Connecticut is ready for the final implementation in 2014;
- Secure federal funding to maximize the benefits of the reforms.

Vogel has 25 years of health care experience working in hospitals, the insurance industry and state government. She earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Western Connecticut State

University and a master's of public health from New York Medical College. For much of her career, she has focused on strategic planning, market research and consumer advocacy.

The Governor said the federal health care reform bill presents sweeping policy changes for the current insurance market and the health care delivery system. The law aims to transform the delivery system into one that is less focused on the volume of services and more on the value and outcome of services provided.

“In order to afford these reforms and create a delivery system that can absorb an estimated 300,000 additionally insured Connecticut residents, we must act in a planned and responsive manner. As special advisor for health care reform, Cristine will help Connecticut capably navigate these complex reforms,” the Governor said.

In the Fall of 2009, Governor Rell created a Health Care Reform Advisory Board, a multi-stakeholder board that was charged with analyzing the new law and making recommendations. This recently released report will provide valuable first steps toward the planning and implementation process. This report can be found at www.ct.gov/dph/healthcarereform