

SustiNet Health Partnership

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Frequently Asked Questions about SustiNet

Q: *What is SustiNet?*

A: SustiNet is a unique state strategy to expand access to quality healthcare coverage for Connecticut residents.

Q: *Who will it benefit?*

A: SustiNet will benefit many Connecticut residents by expanding access to those who have otherwise been unable to secure affordable, high-quality care.

Q: *How does it work?*

A: By opening up the current model that serves Connecticut public employees and retirees, as well as low-income children and families, SustiNet will expand to provide access to other adults who need affordable, quality health care.

Q: *Who's affected by SustiNet?*

A: Residents will have a choice to buy, on a sliding scale, a range of quality health insurance options provided by private companies and delivered by doctors and hospitals in the community. Fewer uninsured people and higher payment rates to providers will reduce the cost shift to private insurers, which is today reflected in higher premiums charged to employers and households. This will result in lower personal health care costs and more discretionary income.

Q: *What will it cost the state?*

A: SustiNet options are currently being developed, publicly discussed and priced out to make smart investments in good health outcomes.

Q: *Why am I just hearing about this now?*

A: The SustiNet planning process has been an open one, welcoming public input from the start. Phase I of the SustiNet Board's work included a deep look into the state's healthcare issues and priorities, tapping the expertise of more than 160 volunteers from various professions to help guide the research and review of information. Recently, the board discussed and considered seven financial models as it heads toward final recommendations. Now that the Board has collected and processed a great deal of information, it's seeking public input in a more structured way. Complete information is available at www.ct.gov/SustiNet.

Board of Directors

Bruce Gould • Paul Grady • Bonita Grubbs • Norma Gyle • Jeffrey Kramer
Estela Lopez • Sal Luciano • Joseph McDonagh • Jamie Mooney

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Q: *How did this all come about?*

A: SustiNet became law in July 2009 (Public Act No. 09-148) with the purpose of providing Connecticut residents with affordable and accessible healthcare, leading the country in state healthcare reform.

Q: *Have other states done this?*

A: In 2006 Massachusetts required that every resident have health insurance, and the mandate included provisions for subsidized health insurance for those below poverty level and low-cost health insurance for individuals not covered by their employers (Chapter 58 of the Acts of 2006).

Q: *Who is leading the SustiNet initiative?*

A: The SustiNet Board of Directors is an 11 member volunteer board whose responsibilities include presenting a plan to the General Assembly for the implementation of the SustiNet plan. It is co-chaired by Nancy Wyman, the State Comptroller, and Kevin Lembo, the State Healthcare Advocate.

Q: *Who else is involved with shaping SustiNet?*

A: Over 160 volunteers take part in five committees and three task forces which conduct research in various health-related areas and provide evidence-based strategies to the Board for inclusion in the SustiNet plan. This dedicated group of clinicians, advocates, business professionals, union representatives and members of the faith community – who are true experts on healthcare issues – have worked together as volunteers to develop a plan that works for Connecticut.

Q: *What is the decision-making process?*

A: After the SustiNet Board was formed in July 2009, five committees and task forces began researching health issues such as preventive healthcare, healthcare disparities, healthcare quality, obesity and tobacco use as well as coverage options. Currently, the SustiNet Board is conducting briefings to get input and the SustiNet Board will submit draft legislation to the General Assembly in January 2011.

Q: *What is the difference between federal healthcare reform and SustiNet?*

A: SustiNet positions Connecticut to take optimal advantage of both current and future federal money to help keep the state's costs down.

Q: *What are the next steps?*

A: The SustiNet Board has reached agreement on some elements of the plan and they are discussing other elements. The Board will submit its final recommendations to the state legislature early next year.

If you would like to submit a comment on the work of the SustiNet Health Partnership, you may send an email to SustiNet@ct.gov.
