



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

Chamber's HealthWorks Program Logs Big Numbers

MARTIN J. GOLDEN March 23, 2010

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The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce's low-cost health insurance program, Brooklyn HealthWorks, is proving it's the little engine that could! The program created for Brooklyn's small business community now insures more than 540 businesses including over 2,540 employees and their dependents. These record numbers come at a time when enrollment in other regions and other programs have stayed flat or have declined.

"Brooklyn HealthWorks is logging this success at a time when our State is in dire fiscal condition," said Brooklyn Chamber President & CEO Carl Hum. "This proven Chamber program is not a panacea for our health insurance woes but it saves New York State money."

HealthWorks received permanent funding in 2007 through a bi-partisan effort led by Assemblyman Joseph Lentol and Senator Martin Golden. The program potentially saves the State hundreds of thousands of dollars because privately insured employees and dependents seek care from a primary care doctor rather than an emergency room – a typical ER visit can run upwards of \$1,000 per visit – or through government funded public programs, such as

Medicaid or Family Health Plus. Workers and their families who might not otherwise have health insurance are now covered through their employers who signed up for the program, which provides premium support for businesses and employees to lower their monthly costs.

Senator Martin Golden stated, "The economy of Brooklyn depends on programs such as Brooklyn HealthWorks. This program makes sure small business employees and owners have access to health insurance. They deserve this opportunity to live healthier lives and, at the same time, this program supports the development and success of small businesses every day." Senator Golden added, "I commend the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce for both creating this program and working tirelessly to bring awareness to it and enrolling Brooklyn businesses."

In fact, the popularity of the program led to HealthWorks reaching its enrollment goal six months ahead of schedule in 2009, and it continues to receive regional and national attention.

"The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce deserves tremendous credit for envisioning this program, which means more New Yorkers living every day with greater security and more peace of mind," said Assemblyman Joseph Lentol. "By providing access to affordable, quality health coverage, we allow entrepreneurs, small business owners and their employees to be bold in pursuing their creative business ventures and that's what creates new jobs for our new economy. Once again the Brooklyn Chamber was thinking out of the box and into the

future on behalf of Brooklyn."

"Since February 2009 when the debate in Washington began on reforming the nation's health care system, the Brooklyn Chamber has enrolled 236 small businesses in Brooklyn HealthWorks," said HealthWorks Executive Director Dean Mohs. "Until a permanent solution is found and implemented at the state or national level, Brooklyn HealthWorks is making low-cost health insurance available to hard-working Brooklyn employees and their family members."

Brooklyn HealthWorks is a private-label Healthy NY plan. It is the result of a partnership with Group Health Inc. (GHI), an EmblemHealth company, and the New York State Department of Insurance. The program's monthly premiums are well below the lowest no-frills products currently available through health maintenance organizations (HMOs). In addition, Brooklyn HealthWorks does not require patients to see gatekeeper physicians, which means referrals are not needed to see specialists. The tri-state provider network for HealthWorks participants now exceeds 106,000 doctors and specialists at nearly 172,000 locations, including virtually all acute care hospitals in New York.