



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**NEW YORK CITY HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION LAUNCHES
NYC HEALTH INSURANCE LINK'S NEW FUNCTIONALITY AND FEATURES
TO IMPROVE OVERALL USER EXPERIENCE INCLUDING
INFORMATION ON HEALTH CARE REFORM**

New Health Care Reform feature gives small businesses and sole proprietors timely information on changes as they relate to health insurance options

Human Resources Administration (HRA) Commissioner Robert Doar announced today new features and content that will enhance overall user experience and functionality of New York City Health Insurance Link (NYC HI Link). The improvements have been implemented one year after Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg launched the innovative tool and New York City became the first local government in the nation to offer online help to individuals and small business owners. [NYC HI Link](#) has received over 40,000 unique visitors since the site launched in September of 2009.

Developed by HRA's Office of Citywide Health Insurance Access (OCHIA), HI Link is an easy-to-use, web-based search tool that lets users compare the costs and benefits of different plans, side by side, with extensive, unbiased and up-to-date information on each plan. The tool is targeted to small business owners, freelancers and other independent or unemployed workers who do not currently have health insurance coverage or are shopping for more affordable coverage.

"One year after its launch, a great majority of New Yorkers using HI Link find it extremely useful, and their feedback has been critical for us to evaluate the site regularly and make improvements that fit the needs of small businesses," said Commissioner Doar. "We welcome the site's newest content which will provide greater access to information, benefits and services all New Yorkers need and deserve these fiscally-challenging times."

Today, NYC HI Link stands out as a crucial resource to maintain and improve NYC's strong record of insuring individuals and families despite the economic downturn. According to the American Community Survey (ACS)'s numbers released yesterday, New York City is outperforming top 8 US cities on insurance coverage, for children, non-elderly adults and individuals of all ages. The number of uninsured children in NYC went down from 5.7% in 2008 to 4.5% in 2009 and it is lower than the U.S. average (8.6%). Also, Medicaid enrollment has also seen a raise of 11 percent since the beginning of the recession, from over 2.58 million in August 2008 to over 2.86 million in August 2010. While uninsurance increased in the country as a whole for non-elderly adults from 16.8% in 2008 to 20.6% in 2009, it remained steady for New Yorkers (19.8% in 2008 to 19.6% in 2009).

One new feature of NYC HI Link is important information for consumers and small businesses on health care reform. The "Health Care Reform" section is designed to help consumers and small business owners understand the immediate, short-term and long-term changes relating to health insurance imposed by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), signed into law six months ago by President Barack Obama. This page has three distinct portals for individuals and their families, those who are self-employed and small business owners with clear and accessible information of the impact of the ACA for each category. Each portal also offers practical scenarios to illustrate how the law will work for individuals and businesses and

provides additional resources. The entire new Health Care Reform section offers a timely and ready resource to answer many of the questions from New Yorkers who are struggling to make sense of all that they have heard or read about the benefits and protections of the ACA, and will be updated as new information becomes available.

“NYC HI LINK allows New Yorkers to find and compare health insurance options now and understand the ways that federal health care reform will affect their options in the future,” said Marjorie Cadogan, OCHIA Executive Deputy Commissioner. “We are happy to provide New Yorkers with this unique support to assist them in making their best health care coverage decisions.”

Another new highlight is an improved Child Health Plus program (CHP) Savings Calculator. Since its launch, the site has featured a calculator that allows families to determine whether combining public coverage for their children through the CHP and private coverage for the adults could make their health insurance more affordable. Available on all health plan pages through the Individuals Portal, there is a button associated with each plan that sends the user directly to a CHP calculator. This CHP calculator is automatically populated with relevant premium and family size information so that the user can quickly and easily view the possible savings they could obtain for each plan listed on HILink.

Other new features and content include:

- New functionality on all health plan pages that allow users to change their desired preferences and quickly find and compare more plans that fit their unique needs and budgets.
- New links to provider network directories on each health plan page so viewers can see whether his or her doctor or other health care provider is within that carrier's network.
- A user survey allows HI Link to continue serving the needs of New Yorkers effectively. Users can email questions and comments to be considered in future developments for the site.

Since December 2009, the site has been featured as a tool for businesses to provide health insurance at the City’s Department of Small Businesses’ Business Express website, which helps small businesses meet federal, state, and city regulations to open and expand, and at Business Solutions Centers located throughout the city. SBS’ WorkforceOne Career Centers, which help the unemployed and underemployed find work, also help job seekers find coverage through HI Link.

As part of the new NYC HILink features launch, HRA has created a series of four public service announcements with real NYC small business owners who understand the value of the site for themselves and their employees. The PSA’s are already running on NYC TV, and will also air on Taxi TV in taxicabs throughout the city.

HRA’S OCHIA partners with public and private groups to ensure that eligible uninsured New Yorkers enroll in public health insurance and to expand access to affordable private health insurance for New York City’s small businesses, sole proprietors, and working individuals. OCHIA engages in policy and research initiatives that complement and support its outreach and enrollment efforts.

To learn about and use the new NYC HI Link features, visit www.nyc.gov/hilink