

Mayor Unveils NYC Health Insurance Link

Mayor Bloomberg, Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs, Commissioner Doar and Marjorie Cadogan, Executive Deputy Commissioner of HRA's Office of Citywide Health Insurance Access (OCHIA) gave a demonstration of the new NYC Health Insurance Link website in a press conference held at the Uhuru Sustainable Furniture workshop in Red Hook on Monday, September 25.

NYC Health Insurance Link is a powerful web search tool that helps small businesses and individual people compare and evaluate health insurance plans. After entering details such as your general income level and number of dependants (or number of employees if you represent a small business), Health Insurance Link lists all plans available to New Yorkers with your specifications – including public programs such as Medicaid and Child Health Plus and low-cost private options. Funding for Health Insurance Link was made possible through the New York State Health Foundation, who also attended the event.

Uhuru Sustainable Furniture, who hosted the Mayor and HRA for the demonstration, were able to insure all of their employees through a plan called Brooklyn HealthWorks they found using NYC Health Insurance Link. Mayor Bloomberg praised Uhuru for their efforts to insure their employees and the vital role they and other small businesses play in the city's economy.

“This is exactly what New York is all about,” said the Mayor. “Half of the city's employees in the private sector work in small businesses, and their success is crucial to our five borough economic plan.”

“Today we're launching an innovative online search tool that's the first of its kind for any city government in the nation. NYC Health Insurance Link provides clear, unbiased and up-to-date information, presented in a way users can easily understand.”

Commissioner Doar congratulated Marjorie Cadogan, Executive Deputy Commissioner of OCHIA, and her team for all the work they put into NYC Health Insurance Link. “With Mayor Bloomberg's leadership, OCHIA has developed a search tool that makes it easy to connect the uninsured with their ideal coverage options.” He also thanked Richard Seimer, Executive Deputy Commissioner of HRA's Management Information Systems, and his team, who designed and programmed the Health Insurance Link website.

Marjorie Cadogan demonstrated the Health Insurance Link website to the assembly, showing how with just a small amount of information, it was possible to see a range of health insurance options tailored to an individual or business' specific needs. Using the website, businesses are able to choose both the extent of coverage they would like to offer, and the percentage of costs they will pay. Both individuals and businesses are able to prioritize their searches for specific features like out-of-network coverage.

Uhuru Sustainable Furniture co-founders Bill Hilgendorf and Jason Horvath described how important a tool like Health Insurance Link is to small businesses in need of health insurance. “NYC Health Insurance Link is a perfect resource for a small business like ours,” said Hilgendorf. “All the information is in one place, and you can compare plans side by side, which is a huge advantage.”

Health care reform is provoking heated debate across the nation, but with NYC Health Insurance Link, New York City is improving access to care right now. As Mayor Bloomberg said, “We absolutely need Washington to act on health reform. But we can’t afford to wait for them to help more people get health insurance coverage – and we’re not.”