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‘Avenue H’ Provides Health Care Access, Choice to Small Businesses
New name, look part of effort to introduce marketplace to more Utahns

SALT LAKE CITY – Utah’s small business owners trying to navigate the sometimes complex world of health care coverage now have a new route to take them in the right direction – Avenue H.

Today, the Utah Health Exchange announced its new name, as well as a new look and feel, for the marketplace, which connects small businesses with health insurance brokers and carriers, providing increased access to health care and greater choice with regard to health insurance coverage.

The official launch of Avenue H took place at Upper Limit Aviation, a helicopter flight school and training center located at the Salt Lake International Airport. Upper Limit joined the Utah Health Exchange in April 2012.

Upper Limit Aviation owner Lois Reid said it was important that she provide health insurance to her employees, and Avenue H was able to meet the needs of her company. This is the first time the company has offered health care coverage to its staff.

“Culturally, this fits in well with us. We are a family, and we wanted to provide health insurance to keep our employees happy and healthy,” Reid said. “As a small business owner, what we really liked was that we could set a certain amount and our employees could buy any insurance with it. They choose their plan.”

Avenue H works with employers, health insurance brokers and private carriers, which deliver health care coverage to Utahns.

Currently, 309 Utah small businesses provide health insurance through Avenue H, accounting for 7,337 people. Thirty-two percent of those companies were previously not providing health insurance to their employees.

“We are heading in a new direction, and we couldn’t be more excited,” said Patty Conner, director of Avenue H. “For many people, the word ‘exchange’ connotes government, and we want to remind Utah’s small business owners and their employees



that we are built on free-market ideals. We built the marketplace as an approachable, consumer-oriented solution to health care coverage. Avenue H is the first step in a better direction.”

Avenue H allows employers to contribute a fixed amount toward employees’ health care coverage. Employees then select a plan that fits their own individual needs, choosing to contribute more than their employer’s set amount if they want enhanced coverage.

Avenue H partners with insurance carriers Regence BlueCross BlueShield, United Healthcare and Select Health.

Broker Celia Nash, owner of Team Nash, has 47 clients on Avenue H, including Upper Limit Aviation. Many other Utah businesses are currently making decisions about insurance options for the upcoming year.

“Avenue H provides a platform for small business owners to purchase affordable health insurance and at the same time bring choice to their employees. Some of these clients did not have insurance prior to joining the Exchange, now Avenue H,” Nash said. “It is a game changer for both the employer and the employee.”

The Utah Health Exchange was created in 2008 as an innovative, state-based health care reform solution. The intent was to directly connect consumers with information that would allow them to make better health care choices and to then build an online portal that would connect them to insurance brokers and providers.

“The Utah Health Exchange has always been a free market, health insurance portal that existed to connect businesses and employees with the marketplace,” Conner said. “Those are the ideals we wanted to convey when we came up with this new name. The ‘H’ in Avenue H stands for health, and ‘Avenue’ represents movement toward a better destination.”

For more information, visit www.AvenueH.com

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