

NEWS RELEASE

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Re: Lubbock Chamber Launches Association Health Plan Made Possible by New Regulations

LUBBOCK, Texas – The Lubbock Chamber of Commerce today announced new health insurance plan options for small business members, made possible by Association Health Plan rules issued by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) last month. The Chamber is targeting an effective coverage date for the new West Texas Employer Health Plan as early as October 1.

“The opportunity for this new flexibility is due to an Executive Order issued last fall by the White House that allows for the creation of Association Health Plans for small employers with 50 or fewer employees. Those regulations were finalized in late June,” said Chamber Chairman Cory Powell. “The Lubbock Chamber actively urged and provided input into this new rule, and we have worked diligently to explore solutions we could bring to small businesses without delay.”

Congressman Jodey Arrington also was on hand and offered remarks at the announcement. Powell said the Chamber had regularly expressed the healthcare related concerns and needs of small businesses in West Texas with the Congressman, who also applauded the new USDOL rule.

Under the new rule, small businesses can enjoy the flexibility that large businesses have under the Affordable Care Act by pooling together. Until now, small businesses have been under more stringent Affordable Care Act regulations than large businesses.

The Chamber hopes to roll out plans soon with a possible effective date of October 1 and is working closely with its insurance carrier partner.

“The Chamber has carefully and thoughtfully evaluated our options on behalf of our members, to whom we know we are accountable for finding the best solutions for the issues that keep them up at night,” said Powell.

The Chamber provided detailed input to the U.S. Department of Labor on Association Health Plan regulations earlier this year and in May traveled to Washington D.C. to discuss the importance of this issue Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz as well as Congressman Jodey Arrington and organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

“We understand the challenges our small business members face when it comes to health insurance coverage,” Chamber Chairman Cory Powell. “We are doing our best to roll out these new plan options soon.”



The Lubbock Chamber of Commerce represents almost 1,900 businesses and over 79,000 employees on the South Plains which accounts for over \$2 billion in annual household earnings in Lubbock and West Texas. Since 1913 the Chamber, as a catalyst for business growth; a convener of leaders and influencers; and a champion for a stronger community, has served as a unified voice of business by actively advocating for a pro-jobs, pro-growth, pro-business climate.

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