



Obamacare at Risk Without Full Embrace and Utilization of Private Sector Exchanges Like eHealth, Says CEO Gary Lauer

October 30, 2013

Asks Obama to Allow eHealth to Help in Shopping and Enrollment Process for Health Insurance Policies in the 36 Federal Exchange States -- Without Cost to Taxpayers

Lauer Also Calls on His Home State of California's Exchange, "Covered California," to Explain Its Refusal to Allow eHealth to Enroll Tax-Subsidy-Eligible Californians

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA -- (Marketwired) -- 10/30/13 -- Gary Lauer, CEO of eHealth, the nation's leading health insurance exchange, in a letter to President Obama, offered his company to help "fix" the current problems experienced by the federal exchange.

"We are ready to help you get this program back on track promptly, with the cooperation of the federal exchange, if you allow us to take over the shopping and enrollment process in all 36 federal exchange states -- *without cost to the taxpayer*. While your staff is working hard to repair Healthcare.gov, with your support, we can be the stopgap that is needed."

Lauer wrote to the president that, "Last year, eHealth had 20 million visitors to our website from across the nation, a substantial number of whom were between the vital ages of 18 and 34. Our website operates at the highest levels of Internet consumer availability and reliability."

eHealth, a public company located in Silicon Valley, California, has been an Internet health insurance marketplace that has enrolled millions of individuals in affordable health insurance policies over the last 13 years -- approximately 40% of whom were uninsured before coming to eHealth.

Lauer challenges California Exchange: "Why give lower income people fewer choices on where they enroll in health insurance than wealthy people?"

At a national telephonic press conference held today, Lauer also called on the health insurance exchange in his home state of California, called "Covered California," to "explain your refusal to allow eHealth to assist in enrolling tax-subsidy eligible individuals, in the same way as the federal exchange has agreed to do."

"Wealthy people under Obamacare are allowed to use eHealth or purchase their health plans anywhere," he said. "Last year HHS-CMS issued a highly consumer-protective regulation allowing eHealth and other private sector health insurance websites to enroll lower income tax-subsidy eligible people, and in August of this year it signed an agreement with eHealth allowing it to assist the federal exchange with the shopping and enrollment process. Why won't Covered California do the same?"

Carl Guardino, the President and CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, a public policy trade association that represents more than 390 of Silicon Valley's most respected companies, supported Lauer's and eHealth's request of Covered California. "Covered California currently does not include experienced online marketplaces for subsidy-eligible, lower-income residents," said Gaurdino. "This should be fixed immediately so that everyone in our state, regardless of income level, can have the same choices."

In a letter to Executive Director Peter Lee and Covered California, several members of the California Latino Legislative Caucus called on the state exchange to work with eHealth and other private online marketplaces.

"We are writing to urge you to allow 'web-based brokers,' which meet the conditions of relevant federal regulations, to partner immediately with Covered California in order to maximize the number of enrollees coming into the California Exchange," the letter reads. "Failure to utilize all available tools at our disposal, including web-based brokers, may undermine our collective goal of enrolling as many eligible individuals as possible under the Affordable Care Act (ACA)." The letter was sent by a group of California Senators and Assembly members including California Latino Legislative Caucus Chair Senator Ricardo Lara, Assembly Member V. Manuel Perez and Assembly Member Luis Alejo.

Lauer calls for transparency and asks "We need transparency -- how many people enrolled? Medicaid versus private insurance?"

Lauer also expressed his concern that, according to published reports, the bulk of other state exchange enrollments are of Medicaid-insured recipients, and questioned Covered California's success in signing up individuals for private health plans. He called on California to break out the "total numbers" that are being presented to the media. "Be transparent and release the number of people *actually insured* through the state's exchange since October 1, 2013," he said.

To date, the state has only reported the number of Californians who have begun the enrollment process, and has not published the percentage of those who have begun enrollment on Medicaid versus private insurance. In particular, the state should publish the numbers of young people between the ages of 18 and 34 who have begun to enroll, as well as actually obtained health insurance through Covered California.

"It is vital for this system to appeal to younger and healthier people who don't want to use call centers or paper applications, but would prefer to enroll online, including using their mobile devices," Lauer said.

Additional information about the cost-free enrollment strategy as well as the following attachments can be found at www.costfreeenrollment.com.

Attachments (available on www.costfreeenrollment.com):

Copy of letter from California Latino Legislative Caucus
Copy of letter from California Senate and Assembly Members from Silicon Valley
Quotes from Silicon Valley leaders

About eHealth

eHealth, Inc. (NASDAQ: EHTH) operates [eHealthInsurance](#), the Nation's first and largest private health insurance exchange where individuals, families and small businesses can compare health insurance products from leading insurers side by side and purchase and enroll in coverage online. eHealthInsurance offers thousands of individual, family and small business health plans underwritten by more than 200 of the nation's leading health insurance companies. eHealthInsurance is licensed to sell health insurance in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. eHealth, Inc. also provides powerful online and pharmacy-based tools to help Medicare beneficiaries navigate Medicare health insurance options, choose the right plan and enroll in select plans online through PlanPrescriber.com (www.planprescriber.com) and eHealthMedicare.com (www.eHealthMedicare.com).

For more health insurance news and information, visit the eHealth consumer blog: [Get Smart -- Get Covered](#).

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Source: eHealth, Inc.