

Exploring an NSBA Health Insurance Consortium

Both small and large law firms face challenges in relation to the availability of health insurance options as well as the rising costs of these options. The Nebraska State Bar Association is working to offer a health insurance option for its members by establishing the NSBA Health Insurance Consortium. In simple terms, the Consortium will consist of multiple employers, with NSBA membership, working together to obtain affordable health insurance coverage on terms similar to those available only to large employers. The Consortium allows member employers to negotiate and to manage the coverage as a single entity. The Consortium's plan will be a multiple employer welfare arrangement or a "MEWA," several of which have existed in Nebraska for decades. Here are some of the advantages of participation in the Consortium:

- **Affordable Coverage:** By pooling together, employers are better positioned to obtain more affordable health insurance coverage due to economies of scale, managing savings, and spreading risk.

- **Flexibility:** The Consortium expects to offer a variety of ACA compliant health plan options. Each employer in the Consortium would have the option of selecting the type of health plan or plans that works best for its employees (high deductible plan vs. low deductible plan, etc.).

- **A Stable Community:** The NSBA's goal is to create and to encourage a stable community of employers participating in the Consortium. When a group has a stable environment, annual rate fluctuations are less likely and less dramatic from year to year.

- **Available to Family Members:** Employers participating in the Consortium may offer family and dependent coverage to their employees.

- **Member Governed:** The Consortium will be governed by participating employers in the Consortium and Consortium leadership will be elected by those participating employers. Thus, the individuals making decisions about the Consortium's



Elizabeth Neeley

plan have a vested interest in offering the best possible coverage options at the best possible price.

Several insurance companies have indicated an interest in providing health plan options to the Consortium. In order for us to provide you with the information you need in order to decide if joining the Consortium is the right option for your firm, we first need to provide information to these insurers about the potential pool so that they can provide us with accurate quotes.

In February of 2018 we conducted an electronic survey of the membership to determine if we have the critical mass needed to go forward. I am happy to report that we had a sufficient response to the survey. We will be filing an application with the Department of Labor and will request proposals from the interested insurance companies. It is our plan to provide you with the coverage options and information about premiums that you need in order to make an informed decision in time to participate in open enrollment for 2019.

Additional information will be available on the NSBA website. If your firm or organization is interested in learning more, please feel free to contact me at lneeley@nebar.com.

Elizabeth Neeley, Executive Director
Phone: (402) 475-7091 • Fax: (402) 475-7098
Email: lneeley@nebar.com