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## **Public Service Unions, Elected Officials Launch Effort to Secure Health Care Pooling**

*Hartford, CT* – Calling it “win-win” for workers, employers and taxpayers alike, union leaders and elected officials today launched an effort to reduce municipal health care costs for Connecticut’s cities and towns.

Speaking at a press conference at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, advocates urged support of legislation that would enable municipalities to opt into the state health insurance plan at cost. “Health care costs are the major issue at bargaining tables across the state,” said Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano, whose union represents 32,000 workers in state and local government and boards of education. “Rather than push to reduce insurance costs by reducing employee benefits, true health care pooling would take us in a different direction – reducing costs by increasing the size of the pool.”

In 2011, Governor Dannel P. Malloy, the legislature, and Comptroller Kevin Lembo established the Connecticut Partnership Plan. This program has allowed non-state public employers to take advantage of the state’s health benefits plan design that invests in wellness and price stability. While the Partnership provides those communities that have joined it with greater price stability, it increases costs by keeping these groups in separate pools based on claims and experience.

“Allowing municipalities a way to provide cheaper, better health care coverage would take away one of the biggest obstacles municipalities face during labor negotiations,” said New London Mayor Daryl Justin Finizio. “It would allow us to help the people who plow our streets, teach our children and keep our cities safe – and it would help our taxpayers, too.”

In 2012, New London became the first municipality in Connecticut to join the Connecticut Partnership Plan. The City currently has 230 full-time employees in the Partnership, Finizio noted, adding that true pooling could save New London taxpayers \$150,000.

“I applaud Mayor Finizio for his leadership in making New London the first city to join the Partnership and embrace the concept of health care pooling,” said Connecticut AFL-CIO Executive Secretary-Treasurer Lori Pelletier. “We need the state legislature to expand that vision so that any city and town in Connecticut can have the opportunity to realize savings that will help protect local services and reduce the tax burden.”

Mark Waxenberg, the Executive Director of the Connecticut Education Association, said during the press conference that true pooling would save on average \$4,000 per policy.

State Rep. Peter Tercyak (28<sup>th</sup> District), co-chair of the legislative Labor Committee, reiterated the need for true pooling. “It’s time for us to do something that will save money on the local level, and this is it,” he said. Tercyak was joined at the press conference by State Rep. Russ Morin (26<sup>th</sup> District) and State Rep. Linda Orange (28<sup>th</sup> District). After the press conference, Luciano and Finizio testified at the Labor and Public Employees Committee hearing in support of health care pooling legislation.

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*Council 4 of the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME) represents 32,000 employees and is the state’s largest AFL-CIO union. To learn more, go to [www.council4.org](http://www.council4.org) or find us on Facebook at Council 4 AFSCME.*