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Lubbock Chamber and FirstCare Health Plans Unveil Private Market Alternatives to the Federal Health Care Marketplace

Ten new plans give Chamber business members choice, affordability and guaranteed options

LUBBOCK and AUSTIN, Texas (October 8, 2014) – Health care mandates weigh heavily on the minds of Lubbock area business owners. Harnessing the power of the local business community, the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce and FirstCare Health Plans today unveiled expanded employer health plans open to Chamber business members. With 18 total plans to choose from, the 2015 Chamber Employer Health Plan provides member companies a range of new coverage choices similar to those offered by large employers in the region, as well new funding options to help control costs. Open enrollment runs October 1 through November 14, 2014 for employees of existing Chamber groups. New groups can enroll now through December 2014 for coverage beginning January 1, 2015.

Member companies with two or more employees qualify automatically for the Chamber Employer Health Plan.

"We respect business owners' rights to choose to provide health care coverage for their employees and we offer multiple plan options that can be customized to fit their unique needs," commented FirstCare CEO and President Darnell Dent. "It's no secret the Affordable Care Act has caused concern for businesses of all sizes. Our plans provide comprehensive, high-quality affordable alternatives to the Federal health care exchange for Lubbock Chamber member businesses."

"Lubbock Chamber member companies have the unique opportunity to participate in high quality, comprehensive health care coverage similar to the offerings from large area employers at a fraction of the cost," commented Chairwoman Alona Beesinger, Lubbock Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber Employer Health Plan offers options to member companies who may not have been able to offer coverage in the past and includes an extensive local network of doctors and hospitals, encompassing Covenant Health and UMC, along with pharmacy coverage. Employers choose their contribution levels and what plans to offer their employees. Plans can be supplemented with dental, vision and other ancillary coverage, health savings accounts and health and wellness products.

Using the new FirstCare Health Connect portal, businesses gain access to enrollment in one or more of the 10 new plans or the eight existing plans for currently enrolled groups. Once enrolled, the platform tracking and reporting system streamlines health care administration and ACA-compliance support for employers, freeing them to focus on their business. In addition, FirstCare provides local Lubbock service and support.

Employees can expect a simple one-stop shop for enrollment in medical, dental, pharmacy, ancillary, health savings accounts and health and wellness products, plus highly-personalized support tools and local service. In addition, employees can return to FirstCare Health Connect after enrollment to take advantage of health and wellness activities and products, as well as health assessments and information.

About the Lubbock Chamber Employer Health Plan and the Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber Employer Health Plan was founded by businesses working together through the Chamber to find a solution for Chamber member businesses. Launched in 2006, the Chamber Employer Health Plan is community collaboration between the Chamber, FirstCare Health Plans, Covenant Health, and UMC Health System.

The Lubbock Chamber of Commerce represents over 2,100 businesses and 73,000 employees on the South Plains with their \$900 million in economic impact to West Texas. To become a member of the Chamber or to learn more, please call (806) 761-7000 or visit www.lubbockchamber.com.

About FirstCare Health Plans

Our mission is to provide access to high quality, affordable health care through strong partnerships in the communities we serve.

Since 1985, we've been serving the health care needs of members across North, West, and Central Texas. Today, our service area includes 108 counties, with local offices in Abilene, Amarillo, Lubbock, Waco, and corporate offices in Austin, Texas. We offer a wide range of HMO, PPO, HSA, and ASO products through a variety of programs, including small and large employer plans; state, federal and teacher plans; government programs; and the Health Insurance Marketplace. With the support of our owners, Covenant Health in Lubbock and Hendrick Health System in Abilene, we serve over 170,000 members. For more information, please visit www.firstcare.com.