

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Area Legislators Hold Insurance Merger Forum

Legislators, constituents raise questions about Anthem merger

Rep. Gregg Haddad (D-Mansfield) hosted a community forum on insurance mergers Monday evening at the Mansfield Public Library. Speakers discussed what the proposed merger of health insurance companies Anthem and Cigna will mean for consumers. Rep. Haddad hosted the event along with **Sen. Mae Flexer** (D-Killingly), **Rep. Linda Orange** (D-Colchester), **Rep. Susan Johnson** (D-Windham) and the Connecticut Campaign for Consumer Choice.

“If this merger takes place, the new company will own 64% of the health insurance market in Connecticut – that’s unprecedented,” **Rep. Haddad** said. “It raises a lot of questions about what the fallout of this decision could be for the consumer. People have concerns about affordability, about provider choice, and about what this will mean for their families. We wanted to give people a chance to ask questions and learn more about the merger now, while they can still have a say in the outcome.”

In the coming months, the Connecticut Insurance Department will hold a hearing to review the proposed merger. If Anthem buys Cigna, it would become one of the three largest insurers in the nation. The proposal has led to concerns that with fewer choices, health insurance costs for consumers and employers may rise. Currently, UnitedHealth, Anthem, Cigna, Aetna, and Humana are the only national health insurance companies.

“There are a lot of changes going on right now in our healthcare system and if we’re not carefully monitoring the changes that are taking place, we are going to wake up one day ten years from now with a healthcare system that’s unrecognizable,” said **Sen. Flexer**. “We have to make sure we are doing whatever we can to ensure we have a healthcare system that’s affordable and accessible for everyone.”

“The more public scrutiny of this merger, the better,” **Rep. Orange** said. “Health care is about more than shareholders and bottom lines – we want to make sure someone is looking out for Anthem and Cigna customers.”

“I’m sure rates will be going up as a result of this merger, if it goes through, and I’m glad we’re raising public awareness about this important issue. I thank Representative Haddad for organizing the forum in Mansfield,” **Rep. Johnson** said.

Two speakers from the Connecticut Campaign for Consumer Choice, an advocacy group formed to promote a thorough and public review process for pending insurance mergers, also joined the forum. The group is composed of the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, the Connecticut State Medical Society, and Connecticut Citizen Action Group.

“CSMS has been concerned with issues of access, choice, innovation, and transparency regarding the merger for some time. We’re very fortunate to have Rep. Haddad sponsor this event,” Matthew Katz, Chief Executive Officer of the Connecticut State Medical Society said. “The proposed merger would have significant implications for Connecticut’s already highly concentrated health insurance market. This merger could create a monopolistic power that we’ve never seen before.”

“Insurers claim that by getting bigger, they will be getting better. They claim that these mergers are good for consumers and that they will lead to lower costs, better quality, and improved choices and access to care,” said Jill Zorn, Senior Policy Offer at the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut. “But the evidence points to the exact opposite results: higher costs, lower quality and less choice and access.”

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