



# Innovation Blossoms In NYC

**W**hile America waits to see if health care reform will become a law and what the details of such legislation will look like if it does pass, one local company is aiming to provide the benefits of what reform idealizes without any regulatory or tax burden. This firm, Transparent Health Network, may offer the key to much of America's health care crisis today.



Betty Heiman

Transparent Health Network started two years ago as the vision of Betty Heiman to bring affordability and transparency to health care in America for workers without insurance. An ambitious goal to be sure, but Heiman was Entrepreneur of the Year with her first company and physicians believe this endeavor has even greater potential.

"Transparent Health solves two parts of the American Health Care crisis," Heiman said. "We bring affordable care to the uninsured and we do so transparently by posting our fee schedule online. This way the average consumer can get a good idea of what health care costs right here in our own backyard."

"The support of doctors has been exciting as we have already grown our network from zero to over 1,500 provider locations in the metro New York area alone," Heiman continued.

The medical community sees the affects of the uninsured – and they are seeing some of their own patient base struggling with the loss of insurance.

"There are many employees who are uninsured – including those that work part-time

and those who are contract or 1099 employees," Heiman said. "Even with a contribution from an employer, many workers choose to forego insurance today because the employee's portion of the monthly fee is simply too high."

Transparent Health Network is an option employers can add to their benefits roster so that employees can have a choice of accessing health care – even when they cannot access or afford insurance. The total fee for Transparent Health Network is \$39 for an individual or \$54

for a family, a fraction of the cost of traditional health plans making it affordable to a broader spectrum of individuals.

Transparent Health Network's price point is so low because it is not insurance but a network that gives its members access to deeply discount medical services across a broad spectrum of care. In return for their monthly fee, members can access primary and specialty care including pediatricians, OB/GYNs and family doctors as well as ancillary care providers and medications through their exclusive pharmacy provider, Rite Aid. Members pay providers at the time of service, paying only for care when they want it. Transparent Health Network is not intended to replace insurance, but to complement it for employers and employees alike. Transparent Health Network is designed to accommodate the needs of sole proprietors, small employers and independent contractors.

The service also opens the door to a broader range of employers seeking care for their employees. For many employers who have

seen their profit margins contract, insurance for employees is simply too expensive to be a possibility. At the Transparent Health Network price point, many firms can now afford to offer a health care option for their employees where none was previously available.

Janine Regosin, Executive Director of Queens Medical Society also sees value in Transparent Health Network. "One of the things we value and hope our legislators keep in mind, is preserving the relationship between the patient and the physician. Transparent Health Network puts decisions about medical care back in the hands of patients and physicians, taking you back to old-fashioned medi-

cine where people pay for services as they need them. It eliminates 3rd party interference."

"What the public doesn't realize is that physicians have trouble getting paid for their services," Regosin continued. "Transparent Health Network brings fairness – It is a fair price for services, and physicians would be happy to accept those fees, rather than having to deal with the constant denials of the insurance companies. That is one reason why so many of our physicians have embraced Transparent Health Network so enthusiastically."

More info is available on the firm at [www.transparenthealthnetwork.com](http://www.transparenthealthnetwork.com)

## LICBDC Hosts Annual Luncheon And Trade Show

**T**he Long Island City Business Development Corporation (LICBDC) hosted its 2009 Annual Luncheon and Trade Show at Terrace on the Park honoring Joe Conley, CB 2 member; Green Business Awardee John Chambers, MetLife; and William D. Modell Community Service Awardee Gary Kesner, Silvercup Studios. In addition, State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli delivered the keynote speech on economic development in Long Island City, Astoria and Queens.



Marva Kalish, Outreach Project Coordinator; Jacqueline Donado, Strategic Program Coordinator and Sophia Ganosis, Chief of Operations for the Queens Chamber of Commerce.

## Wage & Hour Laws: Five Things That Business Owners Should Know

Courtesy of Stephen D. Hans & Associates, P.C.

**N**ew York businesses are facing increased wage and hour investigations from both the U.S. and New York State (NYS) Departments of Labor (DOL). In 2008, the NYS DOL collected \$24.6 million in back wages from NYS businesses – the highest year on record and a 38 percent increase from 2006. The U.S. DOL recovered \$82 million in back wages nationwide for the first six months of 2009 and is hiring 250 more field investigators.

NY business owners cannot afford to ignore these figures, which do not include lawsuits brought by private attorneys. The following are five issues that employers should be aware of:

- Federal law assesses violations for up to three years past, but NYS law allows for recovery of unpaid wages going back six years. Even for a small business, this can

turn into a five or six figure assessment once it is applied to all current and past employees.

- Wage and hour laws are not limited to the minimum wage rate and the requirement to provide overtime pay for any hours over 40 per week. Many employers face other wage and hour issues, such as split shift pay, spread-of-hours pay, and tip credit requirements, among others.

- The laws provide for stiff penalties and interest against an offending employer. Under NYS law an employee can recover an extra 25 percent of such wages as "liquidated damages," as well as interest at the rate of 16 percent per year. Additionally, the state can assess civil money penalties of up to 200 percent of any unpaid wages that are found to be due to employees, as well as further fines for various types of recordkeeping violations. Thus, even a relatively small wage and hour violation can turn into an expensive problem.

- Employers must have records showing hours worked and pay received by each employee in order to successfully defend against a claim or investigation. Without these records the law shifts the legal burden of proof to the employer to prove that the hours and pay that an employee is claiming are incorrect. Thus, without adequate records, whatever hours and pay an employee claims he/she worked and received will usually be accepted as true, and it will be difficult for an employer to rebut the employee's claims and prove that his/her employees received adequate compensation for the hours they worked.

- Business owners do not avoid personal liability from wage and hour violations by incorporating. The law provides for individual liability of business owners and managers who control or oversee employee work and payroll. Even an absent shareholder-investor may be held personally liable for wages owed. Many business owners take wage and hour

compliance for granted, believing that they are reasonably compliant, and do not appreciate the risks they face. All businesses – no matter how small – should arrange for a comprehensive review of their payroll and recordkeeping procedures by an experienced employment attorney in order to minimize liability in the event of an investigation or litigation.

*Stephen D. Hans & Associates, P.C. is an employment and labor law firm with over 30 years of experience representing NYC area businesses in all areas of employment law. Further information about the firm can be found at their website: [www.hansassociates.com](http://www.hansassociates.com). To schedule a consultation, call 718-275-6700 or email [info@hansassociates.com](mailto:info@hansassociates.com). For information on the firm's free employment law seminars, contact Leila at 917-620-5364 or [leilanoor2003@yahoo.com](mailto:leilanoor2003@yahoo.com).*