



# News

## *For Immediate Release*

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## **OHIC Announces open forum to collect additional public comment on rate factors.**

*Will occur at 6:00 pm June 15, 2009 at RI Public Utilities Commission*

**Cranston, RI June 11, 2009** — The Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC) announced today that it has scheduled an open forum on June 15, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. at the RI Public Utilities Commission Offices at 89 Jefferson Boulevard in Warwick, RI to collect additional public comment on the proposed rate factors to be used by health insurers in calculating their commercial insurance premiums 2009 and 2010.

“The volume of public comment on this issue to our Office has been significant,” said Commissioner Christopher F. Koller, “But we want to make sure anybody who would like to comment has a chance to weigh in on this issue, which involves many tradeoffs. Several of the letters themselves called for just this type of a meeting and we agree it is important.”

At the direction of the Commissioner, on May 15, 2009 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Rhode Island, Tufts Health Plan and United Health Care of New England submitted for OHIC review the medical inflation, administrative costs and contributions to reserves rates (or “rate factors”) they plan to use to calculate commercial health insurance premiums for the end of 2009 and 2010. These were released on the OHIC web site on May 18, 2009 with a solicitation for public comment through June 5, 2009 initially.

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That comment period has been extended to allow for this additional input.

All information on the proposed rate factors is available at  
<http://www.ohic.ri.gov/2009%20RateFactorReview.php>

Any member of the public is invited to attend and to speak at the open forum. After brief opening remarks by the Commissioner, speakers will be called in order of sign up, which will occur at the start of the meeting. Speakers will be asked to adhere to consistent time limits and OHIC representatives will collect all comments.

“I encourage any interested party to speak up,” said Koller. “Balancing the needs of employers, patients, providers and the health care system is vital importance to all of us.”

By statute, after public comment and analysis of the filings, the Commissioner has the authority to accept or propose to modify or reject a health plan’s proposed rate factors. Health plans that do not accept the Commissioner’s proposal can request a rate hearing. Such a hearing would commence by mid-July.

### **About the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner**

The Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC) was established by legislation in 2004 to broaden the accountability of health insurers operating in the state of Rhode Island. Under this legislation, the Office is dedicated to:

1. Protecting consumers
2. Encouraging fair treatment of medical service providers
3. Ensuring solvency of health insurers
4. Improving the health care system’s quality, accessibility and affordability

The Office sets and enforces standards for health insurers in each of these four areas.  
[www.ohic.ri.gov](http://www.ohic.ri.gov)