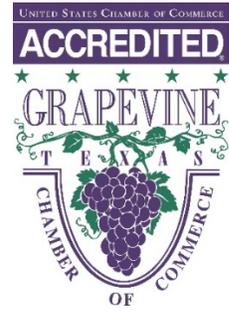


NEWS RELEASE - UPDATED

April 30, 2019

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Re: Grapevine Chamber Launches Association Health Plan with North Texas Chambers Made Possible by New Regulations

GRAPEVINE, Texas – The Grapevine Chamber of Commerce announced new health insurance plan options for small business members. This was made possible by Association Health Plan rules issued by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) in July 2018. The Chamber and our Affiliated partners accomplished this in time for the effective coverage date for the new **North Texas Employer Health Plan Cooperative** opened enrollment for groups on November 1, 2018.

“The opportunity for this new flexibility is due to an Executive Order issued last fall by the White House that allows for the creation of Association Health Plans for small employers with 50 or fewer employees. Those regulations were finalized in late June,” said Chamber CEO RaDonna Hessel. “Using the efforts of the Lubbock Chamber who actively urged and provided input into this new rule, we have followed their lead and worked diligently to explore solutions we could bring to small businesses in all of North Texas without delay.”

The Chambers have regularly expressed the healthcare related concerns and needs of small businesses in Texas with our Congressional delegates, who also applauded the new USDOL rule. While there are some challenges to the rules, Congressman Burgess and Senator Cornyn are both working on federal bills that will protect the regions AHP. Under the new rule, small businesses can enjoy the flexibility that large businesses have under the Affordable Care Act by pooling together through a geographical region. Until now, small businesses have been under more stringent Affordable Care Act regulations than large businesses.

The new **North Texas Employer Health Plan Cooperative** has worked closely with an insurance carrier partner, and their agents. Several Chambers have partnered with Grapevine to create a cooperative that will benefit small businesses, which makes up nearly 80% of our economy.

“The Chamber has carefully and thoughtfully evaluated our options on behalf of our members, to whom we know we are accountable for finding the best solutions for the issues that keep them up at night,” said Hessel. By working with other Chambers in North Texas, we can create a strong option for small business.

Texas Chambers have provided detailed input to the U.S. Department of Labor on Association Health Plan regulations and in May of 2018, traveled to Washington D.C. to discuss the importance of this issue with Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz and organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Their efforts continue today.

The Grapevine Chamber of Commerce represents almost 1,200 businesses and over 59,000 employees in North Texas. Since 1952 the Chamber, as a catalyst for business growth; a convener of leaders and influencers; and a champion for a stronger community, has served as a unified voice of business by actively advocating for a pro-jobs, pro-growth, pro-business climate.

For more information contact the Chamber or go to the website: www.NTEHP.org

