



Thank you!

Because of everyone's hard work, the fight for quality, affordable health care took a huge leap forward last night in Connecticut. Your voices and messages overcame the crushing news and overwhelming noise of the budget crisis. There's more work ahead, for sure, but we should all be proud of the progress we made this legislative session.

With two days left in its session, the state Senate on June 6 approved the SustiNet health care reform bill in a 22 to 14 vote. The legislation, [House Bill 6308, An Act Concerning Healthcare Reform](#), previously passed the House in an 88 to 48 vote. It now moves to Gov. Malloy's office for his signature. Since his staff had worked on the bill's final language -- in response to persistent pressure by consumer advocates, individuals from all walks of life, faith and labor communities and health providers, including doctors -- the governor is expected to sign the legislation.

Prematurely declared dead just a few weeks ago by some in the media, the legislation contains "pooling provisions" and core elements of the [SustiNet proposal](#) developed by the 11-member SustiNet Board of Directors, which drafted the plan with the active support of over 200 residents working on eight committees.

Universal Health Care Foundation president Juan A. Figueroa last night said, "Thanks to today's vote, our state will take proactive steps to contain health care costs and explore alternatives to the current for-profit health care market including a public option." In an earlier story that appeared in the CT Mirror after House passage of the bill, he said, "This bill has concrete steps toward charting a clear course for a home-grown, affordable nonprofit health care option for individuals and small businesses."

We will be getting more details out soon, but here are five key SustiNet-related features in the newly passed legislation:

1. A new SustiNet Health Care Cabinet is established in the Lt. Governor's office to serve as a coordinating point for integrating state and federal health, as well as to promote initiatives to improve health and spend the state's health care dollars more wisely.
2. The bill establishes the Office of Health Reform and Innovation in the Lt. Governor's office. The office will provide support to the Cabinet and function as the state's central coordinator of health policy.
3. The bill directs the SustiNet Healthcare Cabinet to produce a business plan for a nonprofit, public health insurance option. The business plan must be completed by October 2012.
4. The bill directs the SustiNet Healthcare Cabinet to assess the feasibility of the state offering the Basic Health Program beginning in 2014.
5. The bill opens the state employee pool to municipalities beginning in 2012 and qualified nonprofits in 2013.

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