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**President of CHOICE Administrators Exchange Solutions Outlines  
“Best Practices” for State-Run Health Insurance Exchanges**

(ORANGE, Calif. – November 8, 2011) — Kevin Counihan, president of *CHOICE* Administrators Exchange Solutions, outlined seven “best practices” for the establishment and operation of [health insurance exchanges](#) as part of a webinar attended by health plans, medical groups, hospitals, policymakers and health insurance brokers.

In making his remarks, Counihan drew upon his quarter-of-a-century experience in the health insurance industry including his work with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Health Insurance Connector Authority. Counihan helped organize and manage the nation’s first state-sponsored health insurance exchange for individuals and small businesses.

“The No. 1 goal of any exchange, public or private, must be to provide an easy and simple user experience,” Counihan said. “Many people are leery about the process of selecting health insurance, and we need to make their shopping experience as comfortable and easy to understand as it is when they are purchasing other goods and services. That is the only way to gain the public’s trust.”

Healthcare exchanges are in the public spotlight as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) requires all states and territories to establish and launch their own state-run health insurance exchange by January 1, 2014, or default to a federal fallback program. States around the country are currently in various stages of development as each decides whether to build an exchange themselves, partner with an outside organization, or default to the federal program.

In addition to offering an “easy and simple user experience,” Counihan indicated additional imperative elements for a successful exchange:

- Develop a strategic and actionable communication plan.
- Assure integrated eligibility verification for state/federal subsidy programs.

*(More)*

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- Build a comprehensive Web portal for information and enrollment.
- Employ and train an empathetic call center staff.
- Proper enrollment training for navigators and brokers.
- Have a system in place that supports a health plan administrative needs.

Beyond his work in Massachusetts, Counihan grounded his presentation in his experience with *CHOICE* Administrators Exchange Solutions, a division of *CHOICE* Administrators which is the nation's leader in developing and administering health insurance exchanges. For the past 15 years, *CHOICE* Administrators has been operating *CaliforniaChoice*, the nation's most mature private small-group health insurance exchange currently serving 10,000 employers and 150,000 members.

The recent webinar, entitled "Building the Exchanges: Seeking the Right Roadmap," was sponsored by *Payers and Providers*. It was the latest in a series of presentations Counihan has been making recently to industry leaders and policymakers on the topic of [health insurance exchanges](#). In September Counihan addressed the Health Care Reform Congress on Health Insurance Exchanges; and last month he was part of an expert panel in Washington, D.C., discussing the role of actuarial value in the PPACA.

*CHOICE* Administrators is part of The Word & Brown Companies, the nation's leading developer and administrator of consumer-choice exchange models. Among the exchanges currently operated by *CHOICE* Administrators are the *CaliforniaChoice*<sup>®</sup> small group (2-50 employees) and mid-market (51-199 employees) private exchanges; HSA California; Choice Builder, the nation's first ancillary benefit exchange; and Quotit, one of the nation's largest individual/family proposal and online enrollment systems that generated nearly 50 million individual health quotes in 2010. Other *CHOICE* Administrators products include Kaiser Permanente Choice Solution and Contractors' Choice. Further information is available at <http://www.choiceadminexchanges.com>.

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