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IT'S ALL 'RELLATIVE'



Governor unveils state's new health plan



Serra's nephew in critical condition after crash

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COVER STORY

COVER CREDIT

Gov. M. Jodi Rell speaks at the Community Health Center in Middletown Thursday about the Charter Oak Health Plan.

Catherine Avalone | The Middletown Press

Governor introduces health plan for all

Charter Oak plan is available to anyone without insurance

By SLOAN BREWSTER
PRESS STAFF

MIDDLETOWN — After quadruple bypass surgery and a diagnosis of diabetes, Jo-Ann DiNello, who is unable to work full time due to a disability, could not qualify for health insurance.

Chea Hoeub, an immigrant from Cambodia, was recently laid off from his manufacturing job. With preexisting conditions such as hypertension, diabetes and mental-health issues, the genocide survivor may have a difficult time getting medical insurance; but the state's new insurance plan

— Charter Oak Health Plan — will cover both DiNello and Hoeub.

DiNello said she is grateful she will now be able to get educated on how to eat better and

determine which carbohydrates she should eat or avoid based on her illness.

"Because I have to learn how to take care of the diabetes," she said.

Mark Maselli, CEO of Community Health Center in Middletown, welcomed and introduced Gov. M. Jodi Rell to a news conference Thursday afternoon during which she highlighted some of the intricacies of the Charter Oak plan.

"The governor has a vision and now the state has a plan to help those who can't afford insurance afford it," Maselli said.

Since June 30 when the state unveiled the plan her office has received 10,000 phone calls and 3,000 applications. Charter Oak offers premiums at a cost of \$79

"There are no income limits," Rell said. "If you don't have health-care insurance you can buy into this plan."



Gov. M. Jodi Rell announced Thursday at the Community Health Center in Middletown that the state has had more than 10,000 calls and 3,000 applications since the Charter Oak Health Plan opened July 1.

Catherine Avalone | The Middletown Press

to \$259, depending on how much individuals can afford.

"There are no income limits," Rell said. "If you don't have health-care insurance you can buy into this plan."

The plan is available to anyone who does not have insurance, and does not prohibit acceptance to individuals with preexisting conditions.

And, according to the governor, no other state has anything

like it.

"If we wait for Congress we'll be waiting a long time because there is no magic bullet," Rell said.

Charter Oak offers coverage to people ages 19 to 44 — the population that is too old for the Husky Plan and too young for Medicare.

The state has been successful with the Husky Plan and currently 97 percent of children

living in the state are covered by insurance, either through their parents' jobs or through the state insurance.

"It is not, as many people would say, universal health care," Rell said. "It is, in fact, an insurance plan."

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