

Rep. ^{Rob} MATZIE

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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UPMC/Highmark transition plan brokered

As a member of the House Insurance Committee, I have been keeping a close eye on the Highmark/UPMC dispute for the past three years, and I am grateful that the two health care giants finally have come together on a compromise.

While ultimately I'd have preferred our region's health care giants come together permanently for the benefit of all western Pennsylvanians, the transition plan shows a commitment to easing the burden on patients by offering exceptions that allow for in-network access to many UPMC facilities.

However, this complicated process has left many with confusion or unanswered questions about their health care. In an attempt to provide clarity, I've compiled some of the most common questions that I and my fellow Insurance Committee members have asked about this deal, and

the answers provided to us by the state attorney general, secretary of health and insurance commissioner.

Q: If a Highmark subscriber ends up in a UPMC emergency room and is stabilized, but does need inpatient care, who will decide if that person can stay in a UPMC facility with a UPMC physician or must be transported to an AHN facility?

A: The decision as to whether a patient can be transferred to another facility is a medical one. If a patient needs inpatient care and is not medically stable, the patient will receive inpatient care at the hospital where the patient is admitted to the emergency room. It's important to note that the consent decrees apply to both UPMC and Allegheny Health Network emergency room admissions. Therefore, a patient insured under the UPMC Health Plan who goes to an AHN

emergency room also will be transferred to a UPMC hospital once stabilized.

Q: If a Highmark subscriber is being treated for oncology services or a chronic medical issue and wants to continue these services at a UPMC facility with a UPMC physician, who will decide if the person can continue to be treated at UPMC?

A: The patient's treating physician decides whether the patient should be treated by a UPMC physician for oncology or chronic medical condition. Oncology treatments may occur at a UPMC facility or some other facility because UPMC physicians staff a number of cancer centers at local hospitals. In either case, the oncology treatment would be at in-network rates.

Continued on next page

Redistricting Reminder

As you may know, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued a ruling last year upholding the legislative reapportionment maps for Pennsylvania House and Senate legislative districts. As a result, the 16th Legislative District will see some changes effective Dec. 1. The new district will be composed of:

NEW DISTRICT 16 | Effective 12/1/14

Aliquippa City, Ambridge Borough, Baden Borough, Conway Borough, East Rochester Borough, Economy Borough, Freedom Borough, Leetsdale Borough, Monaca Borough, Rochester Borough, South Heights Borough, Harmony Township, Hopewell Township, Leet Township

If you have any questions about the 16th Legislative District, or about any state-related services or programs, please don't hesitate to contact my staff or me. My district office is located at 1240 Merchant Street in Ambridge and can be reached at (724) 266-7774. My staff and I are always ready to help!



UPMC/Highmark transition plan brokered *Continued from previous page*

Q: As a Highmark cardholder, what UPMC facilities will I continue to have in-network access to?

A: Highmark subscribers will continue to have access to the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, UPMC Altoona, UPMC Bedford, UPMC Hamot, Kane Hospital, UPMC Horizon, UPMC Northwest, Western Psychiatric Institute and

Clinic, Hillman Cancer Center and UPMC Mercy.

While there are sure to be issues during this transition period, I want you to know that I am here to help you work through any confusion. If you have questions regarding the UPMC/Highmark transition plan, please contact me.

Rate Shock



This winter, thousands of Pennsylvanians were shocked when their electric bills doubled or tripled in one month. Those customers who had a variable-rate contract with an electric supplier, or who had a fixed-rate contract that expired, were subject to the price spikes.

In February, I wrote to Attorney General Kathleen Kane and asked her to look into this spate of unusually high consumer electric bills. As a member of the Consumer Affairs Committee, I also worked with my colleagues on legislation

that would institute reforms, which would prevent this type of price gouging from becoming commonplace in our state. While not preferred, I was glad to see the Public Utility Commission step up and approve new rules to help consumers avoid these price spikes in the future.

One rule that recently took effect will require competitive energy suppliers to more clearly disclose the details of their offers, especially the risks of variable-rate offers. In regard to fixed-term contracts, suppliers must notify customers by mail

if their contracts are expiring or if there are changes to terms of service.

Another rule will shorten the time to switch suppliers from 40 days to within three days of the request. This new rule will take effect by the end of 2014.

In spite of the PUC ruling, I still believe a legislative remedy is necessary.

If you have any questions about your electric bill, or would like to learn more about the new rules that the PUC instituted, visit www.PaPowerSwitch.com.

STAY INFORMED! If you would like to be kept informed via email about what is going on in Harrisburg and in the district, visit www.pahouse.com/Matzie and click on Email Alerts to sign up.

Working to secure our data

Earlier this year, I introduced two bills that would help protect the state's, and your, most sensitive data. In this age of leaks and hacks, this initiative is of the utmost importance, but the rapid changing nature of technology has made it a difficult task. My bills would offer better protection by implementing simple solutions.

■ House Bill 2041 would prohibit state employees from using non-secured Internet connections while conducting state business. I am troubled that some employees, willfully or not, may be sending sensitive, confidential data from a wireless transmission at a coffee shop, fast food restaurant or other location with free Wi-Fi. Employees should be furnished with adequate tools and training to complete their jobs in a secure manner. The use of unsecured connections could lead to unauthorized people gaining access to sensitive information such as Social Security numbers.

■ House Bill 2121 would prohibit third-party companies from selling personal driver and vehicle information obtained from PennDOT for profit. In November, the transportation bill created a loophole that allows third parties to profit off the sale of this kind of data. Profiting off consumers when they are paying for services from the government is bad policy. This bill would also prevent PennDOT from using any funds generated from the sale of driver and vehicle information to be used for anything but transportation projects.



Funds available to give new life to historic structures



As a member of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, I would like to encourage any eligible individuals or businesses to apply for the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program.

Remnants from our past can be found across the state sitting empty in various states of disrepair. The Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program is meant to breathe new life into these structures and transform them into income-producing properties.

The program, which will be awarded through the Department of Community and Economic Development, is open to any individual, corporation, business trust, limited liability company, limited liability partnership or any other form of legal business entity. The total tax credit awarded to any qualified taxpayer will not exceed \$500,000 in any fiscal year, and the total amount the commonwealth will issue will not exceed \$3 million.

For more information about the program, visit www.newpa.com, or contact my office.

Food Drive a success

I would like to thank everyone who generously participated in the recent food drive my office participated in with partnership from the Boy Scouts of America Laurel Highlands Council and the United Way of Beaver County. Your donations will help to ensure that children are getting the meals they need to grow strong and healthy. Food

donations also will support local, low-income seniors who find it difficult to purchase enough healthy food items on a fixed income.

The generosity shown during the short time the collection box was in my office has been remarkable, and I would like to thank you all for your compassion and support.



Bringing integrity back to Harrisburg

Being able to trust elected officials is necessary for a successful democracy to function, which is why I recently introduced two bills that would strengthen transparency and accountability in Harrisburg.

■ House Bill 1979 would prevent members of the General Assembly from using their position or knowledge to profit off of the activities of certain school entities. The proposal, known as the Legislator Financial Interest Act, would prohibit members of the General Assembly from owning, holding a financial interest in, or serving on the governing body of certain school entities. This prohibition would extend for a one-year period after an elected official leaves office, and would apply to charter

schools, private schools and business or nonprofit corporations that manage a school that receives funds from the state.

■ House Bill 1626 would ban any bonuses or pay raises to state employees that are not achieved through collective bargaining or are not matters of public record. The ban would be applicable to employees of all branches of state government, although it would allow for cost-of-living adjustments. Too often, outgoing administrators will reward loyal staff with generous bonuses that have not been included in a budget or stipulated in a contract. Subsequently, incoming officials are left with unexpected expenditures and holes in the budget, which is why I believe this measure is commonsense.





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Save the Date!

Identity Theft Paper Shredding Event

September 27 | 10 a.m. – Noon

Walter Panek Park, 1055 Breitenstein Road, Ambridge, PA 15003



To ensure that residents can securely dispose of documents containing private information – and do so in an environmentally safe manner – I'm hosting a free shredding event. This event is a great way to get rid of documents used by identity thieves, and all shredded documents will be recycled! Residents are asked to limit their paper to five bags or boxes of unwanted documents containing personal information for secure destruction.

To accommodate the high volume of paper to be shredded, an additional secure collection truck will be on site for shredding to be conducted off site. All shredding will be performed by a local National Association for Information Destruction and Mobile Shredding Association member company.

Common types of unwanted items that should be shredded may include credit card statements or applications, bank statements, canceled checks, old income tax information, insurance and medical records, and materials with identifying personal information like Social Security, credit card, or bank account numbers. Phonebooks, newspaper, and bound books cannot be accepted.

For additional information including questions about how to properly recycle old electronics, please contact my office at (724) 266-7774.

We'll also be collecting donations of non-perishable food at this event.

My office can help you with:

- Car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Assistance in obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Birth and death certificates

- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Problems with the Department of Public Welfare (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Requests for literature of all kinds – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information

- Liquor Control Board concerns or questions
 - Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups
 - Information about federal, state and local government agencies
- Any problem with state government!

