

## Rep. Murphy and Sen. Hayden introduce the “Healthy Minnesota Exchange”

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*Lawmakers believe the bill will open discussion of a Minnesota health care exchange*

Last Monday, State Representative Erin Murphy and State Senator Jeff Hayden unveiled the “Healthy Minnesota Exchange,” another framework for establishing a state health care exchange. Both Rep. Murphy and Sen. Hayden believe this will broaden the conversation on constructing an effective health care exchange.

“Establishing a health care exchange will finally create access to quality, affordable health coverage for individuals and small employer groups,” said Rep. Murphy. “Given the importance of constructing an exchange, it is vital that we consider all of the options available so that, when established, it represents the best of Minnesota’s thinking and leadership.”

The “Healthy Minnesota Exchange” would create a marketplace for consumers to purchase health insurance. Construction of such a marketplace would ensure that consumers in Minnesota would have access to the information necessary to make an informed decision about which provider will work best for them and their families. The “Healthy Minnesota Exchange” would promote a consumer driven approach by focusing on key features like removing barriers to coverage, streamlining of public programs, and establishing clear goals to reduce health disparities.

“Despite the strides we have made in past years with health care reform, there are still a substantial number of Minnesotans who are uninsured,” said Sen. Hayden. “The more options on the table for discussion, the better chance we have at developing an exchange that works for Minnesotans, creating access and addressing health disparities we know exist.”

Establishing a state health care exchange is a key element in the federal Affordable Care Act. As such, lawmakers must come to a consensus on what the exchange should look like or else the federal government will intervene. Already, State Representative Joe Atkins has introduced a bi-partisan bill outlining an exchange in Minnesota. He is still awaiting a hearing.

“We have an opportunity to build an exchange the Minnesota way,” said Rep. Atkins. “The best way to achieve this is to have a thoughtful, informed discussion of what will work best for all players involved.”