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**NEW ENGLAND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS COUNCIL’S BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS “BEST IN CLASS” BENEFITS INITIATVES**

***December 4 conference features keynote speaker Jim Braude, a panel of industry experts and presentations by award winners***

**WALTHAM, MA – Thursday, November 7, 2013—**The New England Employee Benefits Council (NEEBC) will hold its Best Practices Conference “Employers at the Head of the Class” on December 4 at the Waltham Woods Conference Center. The full-day conference kicks off with keynote speaker Jim Braude, Emmy award winning journalist and broadcaster for WGBH and NECN, whose presentation “Grading the Media on Healthcare: Has it Been Thorough and Fair?” will look at the media's responsibility for providing fair and balanced coverage. Jim will offer his view on how the media is shaping public opinion on health care reform and how media coverage may change over the next few years -- for better or worse.

Five employers representing the best in class for employee benefits will present their award-winning programs. “Selecting the winners was particularly difficult because we received a record number of nominations, more than double that of past years,” said Patty Houpt, Executive Director of the NEEBC. “We’ve tapped into some very innovative practices spanning wellness to benefit design to retirement programs that benefits professionals will want to learn more about.”

The conferences “Best Practices” Awards are presented to companies that best exhibit innovation and creativity in the planning and delivery of their employee benefit programs. The presentations will provide firsthand information on how the award winning programs were developed and implemented. This year’s winners include: Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Biogen Idec, CIRCOR International, Lifespan and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. A new awards category for “Lifetime Achievement in Benefits Innovation” will be presented to EMC.

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The conference includes an informative panel “Payment Reform: Going Out on a Limb” headed up by Dolores L. Mitchell, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Group Insurance Commission. She will provide an overview of the GIC’s implementation of state payment reform through the Centered Care Initiative that moves providers from fee for service payment models to global budgets for the care of the GIC’s employees and their dependents. Panelists Tim Gens, Executive VP and General Counsel, Massachusetts Hospital Association; Jeffrey Lasker, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer, New England Quality Care Alliance; Rick Lord, President and CEO, Associated Industries of Massachusetts (AIM); and Rick Weisblatt, Ph.D., Senior Vice President, Provider Networks, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care will offer their insights and reactions to the Commonwealth’s initiatives in a lively discussion moderated by Scott Kirschner, Director of Benefits Strategy, Iron Mountain.

This year's lead sponsor is United Healthcare. Gold sponsors are AllOne Health Resources, HomeBenefitIQ, Liberty Mutual, Minnesota Life Insurance Company, New England College of Business and Tufts Health Plan. Silver sponsors are Abacus Health, BTHR Solutions, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Mercer, Strategic Benefit Advisors, Inc., The Segal Group and UNUM . A few Gold and Silver Sponsorships are still available.

The conference will be held from 8:30 am to 3:45 pm. At the Waltham Woods Conference Center located at 860 Winter, Street, Waltham, MA. More information about conference registration and sponsorship is available at <http://www.neebc.org/>, by calling 781-684-8700 or contacting sue@neebc.org.

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About NEEBC

NEEBC ([www.neebc.org](http://www.neebc.org)) is a Waltham, Massachusetts nonprofit that advances knowledge and education in employee benefits. NEEBC’s 1,250 members manage benefits for an estimated 2.5 million employees. Members include employers and providers of benefits consulting and services throughout New England. NEEBC’s monthly educational programs feature presentations by guest speakers on topics of interest to the benefits community. Members have the opportunity to discuss ideas, become informed about new developments in the field and network with peers. Follow NEEBC on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Neebc>, on LinkedIn at [http://www.linkedin.com/groups/NEEBC-1605507/about](%20http%3A/www.linkedin.com/groups/NEEBC-1605507/about) and on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/neebc) at @NEEBC. Follow the conversation about the conference #NEEBCBest2013.