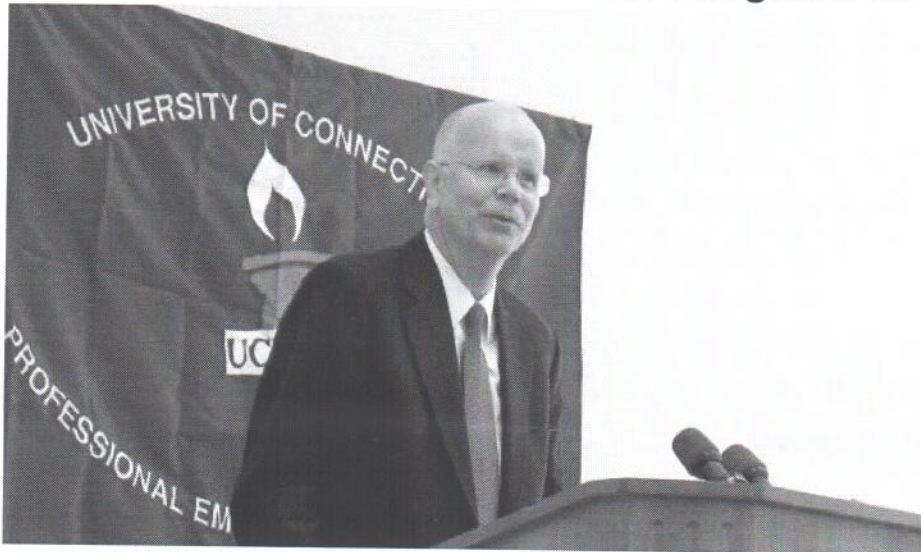


# UNION WIRE

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## Lembo: Health Enhancement Program Is 'Really Working'



State comptroller Kevin Lembo says the Health Enhancement Program (HEP) that was part of the SEBAC agreement is helping to control health costs as it was envisioned.

"Early indicators are that the program is not just working, but really working," Lembo told an audience at the annual UCPEA/AAUP Legislative Luncheon in October. "Primary care visits are way up, but specialty care visits are way down."

A major objective of the HEP is to reduce higher cost visits to specialists and hospital emergency rooms by having all state employees get regular preventive health exams with their primary care physicians and dentists.

Lembo said the Connecticut HEP is "the largest national example of a public sector initiative," which is being studied by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest philanthropy devoted solely to the public's health, to measure its effectiveness.

"They want to see if what we're doing is the right thing by bringing people closer to care instead of pushing them away from care in an effort to manage costs long term," he said. "You are a partner in your health and wellness."

Addressing the establishment of the Hybrid Retirement Plan, Lembo said the state is still awaiting a decision on the pre-tax value of employee contributions by the Internal Revenue Service.

Urging patience while awaiting this decision, he said, "I know from the outside it probably has felt long, unnecessarily so, overly complicated, unfair and a whole bunch of things. I will say to you that in part the reason it has been that way is that we wanted to be as sure as we could anything we do in this transition won't come back to bite both you and me five years from now, ten years from now."

Lembo described the work being done by University faculty and staff as working on the front line in "one of the most important efforts on the state of Connecticut, not only producing the next generation of thoughtful people but the next generation of a workforce that is going to pay the taxes and Medicare when most of us have gone on to the next phase of our lives."

He said: "You're also the key to Connecticut's future economic prosperity by shaping this workforce. As state comptroller I want to do everything I can so that you have the tools and resources

necessary to do that job the best way you can."

Lembo said his October report on state finances showed a \$26.9 million projected deficit for the current fiscal year, but noted the state's finances are in better shape than two years ago, when there was a projected \$3.5 billion deficit in a \$20 billion budget.

"Connecticut's economy traditionally goes in the tank late and comes out really late. That's for lots of reasons," he said of how the state economy follows national economic trends in response to Wall Street. "We're seeing the same pattern this time, but I would argue it's a little slower than normal this time. If you graph our progress it's like a saw-tooth pattern with an overall track line moving in the right direction. We are making some gains and falling back. Generally, I feel we are on the right track but it's a low, slow trajectory."

### Fischer Wins Election as 1st VP

Kathy Fischer, associate director of the Women's Center in the Division of Student Affairs, was elected to serve out the remainder of Mike White's term as First Vice President of Collective Bargaining.

She previously served as Recording Secretary on the Executive Board and continues as a member of the Grievance Team.

### UCPEA Welcomes 111 New Members

Since April of this year, the University has hired 111 new UCPEA members. In mid-October, 19 new members and their UCPEA representatives attended the New Member Coffee Hour, held in the Student Union.