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PICTURED, FROM LEFT: THOMAS J CROYLE (LVBCH PRESIDENT); JEANNINE O'CALLAGHAN, C.F. MARTIN & CO. (LVBCH CHAIRWOMAN); JOE HUXTA, VOLVO/ MACK TRUCKS (LVBCH TREASURER)

LEHIGH VALLEY BUSINESS COALITION ON HEALTHCARE

BUSINESS COALITION KEEPS MEMBERS ON TOP OF CHANGING HEALTH CARE LANDSCAPE

THE CHALLENGES POSED BY HEALTH CARE HAVE TAKEN MANY FORMS OVER THE YEARS: rising costs in the 1980s, the birth of managed care in the 1990s, the economic turbulence of the 2000s and now the Affordable Care Act, or ACA.

Through all these changes, employers in the Lehigh Valley have had a steadfast guide: the Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare. Formed in 1980 by business leaders concerned about inflation in medical costs, the coalition has spent 35 years on the cutting edge of health care costs and quality.

The coalition serves its many members through educational programs and networking events that help employers learn from each other, as well as from nationally recognized experts on health care.

In addition to knowledge, the coalition provides access to medical, dental and other benefits, leveraging its sizable membership to secure competitive prices. That membership includes employers in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey. In 2013, the organization's efforts earned an award for value-based purchasing from the National Business Coalition on Health, and in 2014, one of its members, East Penn Manufacturing Co., was honored with an Employer Excellence Award.

"It was an affirmation that we and our members are doing the right things," said Tom Croyle, the coalition's president. These days, as costs continue to rise for health care, the coalition is focused on issues of value and quality.

"We've been providing forums and exchanges on the changing nature of health care and evolving concepts, such as accountable care arrangements and patient-centered medical homes, more effective ways of coordinating care," Croyle said. "If they're providing benefits to employees, employers need to understand what's happening out there. They need to understand changes in the health care market."

Other events have addressed issues that help employers and employees become smarter consumers, as well as to understand changes wrought by the ACA, Croyle said. "We make them aware of what they need to do to comply, which is especially important as deadlines change and regulations are modified."

In 2015, the coalition plans to delve into the area of data analytics, with an initiative designed to develop better information about areas such as management of chronic diseases, including diabetes. The information will help the coalition develop programs that aid employers in addressing health issues among their employees.

Also on the agenda is a performance assessment of insurers and health plan administrators serving the Lehigh Valley. The goal is to provide coalition members with information about how their health care dollars are being managed, Croyle said. "We have strong partners involved in the process and some very interested employers."

1980	Robert Ivancevich, Executive Director	Edward Donley, Air Products	None	Two PA counties
&	TOP EXECUTIVE	BOARD CHAIR	PROGRAMS OFFERED	GEOGRAPHY COVERED
2015	Thomas J. Croyle, President	Jeannine O'Callaghan, C. F. Martin & Co., Inc.	Medical, Dental, Vision, Prescription Drug, Mental Health and Health Education and Wellness Programs	17 PA counties and three NJ counties