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Brokers Making a Difference: Insights from the CAHIP Innovation Expo 2025

Long Beach, CA – On February 3, 2025, The Queen Mary became a hub of forward-thinking discourse as it hosted the California Agents of Health Insurance Professionals (CAHIP) Innovation Expo. The event brought together over 200 industry leaders, dedicated to shaping the evolving landscape of health insurance in the United States. The expo featured a carefully curated agenda balancing structured learning with networking opportunities, ensuring that attendees were left with both actionable insights and innovative solutions to bring to employers as a benefit offering to their employees, as well as meaningful professional connections.

A Historic Venue for a Forward-Thinking Event

The decision to host the event on The Queen Mary was both symbolic and strategic. The historic ocean liner, now a floating hotel and conference space, provided a setting that blended past and present, serving as an apt metaphor for the insurance industry itself—an established institution navigating ever-changing waters.

CAHIP President **Rosamaria Marrujo** focused her remarks on CAHIP's ongoing advocacy efforts and the role of health insurance professionals in shaping policies that benefit both consumers and industry stakeholders. Marrujo emphasized the importance of collective action with a call to leadership, *"We are not just participants in this industry; we are stewards of its future. Our advocacy, our expertise, and our dedication to our clients define the direction in which we sail."*

Attendees engaged in two rounds of dynamic *Speed Exhibiting* through an exhibit hall of nearly 30 vendor booths. Designed to facilitate rapid-fire networking and exposure to cutting-edge products and services, this efficient format provided direct access to emerging industry solutions and potential business partnerships.

Panel Spotlight: Who's the Captain of Your Ship?

The opening panel discussion brought together some of the most influential voices in the industry to collaborate on latest trends. Moderator **Jessica Brooks-Woods**, CEO of the National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals (NABIP), tackled some of the most pressing issues currently shaping the health care and insurance. Brooks-Woods kicked off the conversation by asking, *"As we navigate regulatory shifts, economic challenges, and technological advancements, what does leadership in this industry truly look like today?"*

Christina Aleckson, Vice President of Women in Insurance & Financial Services (WIFS), emphasized the importance of mentorship and leadership development, noting that *"The best captains aren't those who steer alone but those who cultivate new leaders along the way."*

Kevin Mayeux, CEO of the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA), addressed the evolving regulatory landscape, stressing the need for insurance professionals to stay proactive rather than reactive and engage in advocacy efforts that support sustainable, consumer-friendly policies.

The President & CEO of Health Agents for America (HAFA), **Ronell Nolan**, shared real-world examples of how independent agents have successfully adapted to shifting market dynamics. She pointed out that flexibility and a willingness to embrace new business models will be key differentiators in the years to come.

The theme of the panel, effective leadership requires both vision and action, was underscored in closing remarks by **Alycia Riedl**, President of NABIP, during which she outlined NABIP's strategic initiatives, emphasizing the organization's commitment to professional development, legislative advocacy, and market innovation.

Afternoon Breakouts: Diving Deeper

The afternoon featured specialized breakout sessions, each catering to a distinct area of interest. *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Redefining Healthy* explored innovative wellness strategies and preventive health measures as complimentary options to traditional insurance plans. Continuing education credit applicable to insurance licensing was made available on the topic of efficient use of technology in human resources, and another session presented a deep dive into the Medicare landscape.

A Collaborative Future

Throughout the day, one theme remained clear: the health insurance industry is at a pivotal crossroads. As regulations shift, consumer expectations evolve, and technology continues to disrupt traditional models, professionals must be agile, informed, and proactive.

Consumers are well served with advocates (agents) that can explain the ways to navigate our healthcare system. Without the intervention of an agent, consumers are prey to mal intended marketers and carrier bias.

Attendees left the expo with a renewed sense of purpose, armed with fresh insights, new connections, and a deeper appreciation for the collective effort required to navigate the healthcare insurance industry toward a more sustainable and consumer-centric future.

As one attendee put it, *"This wasn't just another conference, it was a call to action."*



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About California Agents of Health Insurance Professionals (CAHIP)

The California Agents of Health Insurance Professionals is the state's largest association of health insurance agents, brokers and other health insurance industry professionals. www.cahip.com