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Health Coverage Options Available For Local Artists



[Sarah Maurer, Buffalo Rising](#)

As of April 1, two local organizations will be launching a collaborative effort to help keep the members of Western New York's cultural community in good health. The Amherst Chamber of Commerce and the Arts Services Initiative (ASI) of Western New York will be partnering to provide group health insurance to those who work within the cultural sector.

"One of the first things I heard from those in the cultural sector when I came to ASI was that they needed health insurance, but trying to find good coverage and competitive rates as an individual or small organization is incredibly difficult," ASI Executive Director Tod A. Kniazuk added. "This partnership with the Amherst Chamber of Commerce gets the cultural workers the healthcare coverage they need, and also serves as a prime example of the kinds of connections with the business sector and regional leaders that ASI is working to forge."

By providing complimentary chamber membership to all who are members of ASI, the Amherst CoC will be granting those individuals access to group health insurance through their plan. This program will be available to cultural organizations and their employees, individual artists, actors, tech workers, arts administrators, musicians and others employed in the creative field in Western New York. Those who choose to sign up will be able to choose between five plans from Blue Cross Blue Shield, Independent Health and Univera Healthcare. The plans will range from basic to comprehensive, with both single and family coverage options available. New enrollments will be happening every month.

"The Amherst Chamber of Commerce recognizes the value of the arts community to the quality of life in our region," said Colleen DiPirro, President & CEO of the Amherst

Chamber. "Unfortunately, the economy has had an adverse impact on the creative class and their ability to prosper due to less discretionary spending by their customers. The Amherst Chamber is pleased to partner with ASI in an effort to provide services to their members that affords them the opportunity to dedicate their resources to their core competencies. Through a shared membership agreement, members of ASI can take advantage of the Chamber's group health insurance which will provide them with highest level of knowledge and service at the lower group rates. Working together, the Chamber and ASI can continue to make the Buffalo Niagara region a great place to live, work and play."

To get more information on this initiative, contact Christian Solecki at the Amherst Chamber of Commerce at 716-250-4206 or csolecki@amherst.org.

Photo: Music is Art - [Ogre](#)