

# Health Exec

## Aetna moving its HQ out of Connecticut, considering 'several states'

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Aetna confirmed it is in negotiations to move its corporate headquarters out of Hartford, Connecticut, which was been its home since it began as a fire insurance company in 1819.

"We are in negotiations with several states regarding a headquarters relocation, with the goal of broadening our access to innovation and the talent that will fill knowledge economy-type positions," Aetna spokesman T.J. Crawford said in a statement. "We remain committed to our Connecticut-based employees and the Hartford campus, and hope to have a final resolution by early summer."



The company has around 5,800 employees in Connecticut, and Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy said at a Wednesday press conference he believes the "vast majority" of that workforce would remain in the state.

But he also said he has tried to convince Aetna executives, going as far as to commit to matching any incentives for relocation offered by another state. He also produced two letters sent to Aetna CEO Mark Bertolini in recent months asking for a meeting—which, according to Malloy, never took place, and he believes the "lack of a direct response speaks volumes about their intentions, at least when it comes to their headquarters."

Malloy said the state's offer remains on the table, but also said it's a "safe assumption" that he's resigned to the insurer's departure.

“Let’s be clear: Hartford is not ever going to be New York or Boston. And that’s fine,” he said. “Because New York or Boston are not ever going to be Hartford, not when it comes to the history and unique advantages we offer the insurance industry and many other companies that call Hartford home—not when it comes to the unmatched talent we offer these employers, and not when it comes to our responsive and supportive regulatory environment.”

Similar comments came from Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin, who said his talks with senior leadership at Aetna led him to believe a move was inevitable.

“I think it is clear that Aetna decided to long time ago to relocate their corporate headquarters out of Connecticut,” Bronin said in a statement.

Financial analysts appear split on how this will impact Connecticut’s status as the capital of the insurance industry. For Aetna competitors with a presence in Hartford, however, it may be an opportunity for them to bring on new talent.

“The Connecticut labor market will be enriched with hundreds of highly skilled workers and the remaining companies like Cigna, Travelers and Anthem will scoop them up, which makes those companies less likely to move at least until the next election cycle,” John Boyd, principal at corporate relocation consultant The Boyd Company, told the *New Haven Register*.