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## 2012 INDUSTRY ELITE AWARDS

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**Inside:**

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GOT HERE**

**MDRT on  
GLOBAL REGULATION**

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Each year, *National Underwriter Life & Health* salutes the best of the best in the life and health insurance industry, celebrating those who represent game-changing levels of market innovation, regulatory advocacy, industry reputation, community work, and emerging talent. Selecting winners from this year's unusually strong body of nominations proved challenging, but five winners and five honorable mentions stood out as exemplars of the things that are helping to drive the industry forward to meet its challenges and to seize its opportunities. Congratulations to this year's winners of the 2012 Industry Elite awards!

## REGULATORY ADVOCACY

THE GREATEST LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY ADVOCACY  
ON BEHALF OF A COMPANY OR THE INDUSTRY.



### BRIAN FECHTEL

**President of Breadwinners Insurance** for his relentless drive to improve transparency in life insurance pricing.

It is not always easy driving regulatory change in the insurance industry, but Brian Fechtel, this year's winner of the Industry Elite Award for Regulatory Advocacy has never let that stop him. Brian is the president of Breadwinner's Insurance, where he sells mostly life insurance (half term, half cash value) with a little disability insurance and long-term care as well. But Breadwinner's Insurance is known separately as the online portal for Fechtel's prolific writing on the subject of life insurance pricing transparency, a cause he has pursued doggedly.

Fechtels has long felt that the lack of transparency in how life insurance products are priced directly impedes the sales process. If people had a better understanding of how their life insurance products are priced, and could better compare life insurance products from different carriers, Fechtel argues, then customers would be more empowered to make a choice that is right for them. But more importantly, they would also be more willing to buy products that don't strike them as arcane, and from agents they feel they feel are open and trustworthy.

Fechtels spent years trying to convince carriers to change how they disclose information to clients. When that did not work, he turned to writing the NAIC, the Consumer Financial Protection Board, to state insurance commissioners and attorneys general, and to political figures ranging from Elizabeth Warren to the Federal Insurance Office's Michael McRaith. He has also published extensively in insurance media on the importance of pricing transparency. While this has prompted some of his colleagues to consider him an unwanted gadfly, it was also his fellow industry professionals who nominated him for this award.

Industry leaders have long acknowledged in private many of the things I say," Fechtel says. "I know my fellow agents may see me as something of a turncoat but my objective is to turn life insurance agents into financial planning doctors. And I don't think we can get there if we continue to operate as we have for the past 30 or 40 years. I know a lot of people can't envision writing six or eight policies a week, but I really think that is what will occur in the future rather than the one a week they are writing now. There could be a tremendous increase in agent productivity once the information everybody needs is out there and people can make confident decisions more quickly, knowing what is on the table."

### HONORABLE MENTION

**THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH UNDERWRITERS**, for its ongoing engagement on issues pertaining to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.