Long-Term Care Providers Online Connection

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Resources Available for Health Insurance Counseling and/or Coverage for Employees

By Patti Cullen, CAE

Earlier this week we had an opportunity to meet with the President, Operations Manager and Senior Communications Specialist from Portico HealthNet about their programs and services; and how we may be able to work together on similar goals of finding health insurance for the uninsured within our workforce. Since their services were news to me, I am assuming they are also news to some of you, so I want to make sure you are aware of this existing resource for your employees. As background, Portico Healthnet is a nonprofit health and human services organization that helps uninsured Minnesotans access affordable health coverage and care. Since 1995, 8,000 uninsured children and adults have enrolled in Portico's safety-net coverage program, and another 8,000 have been enrolled in public coverage programs with assistance from Portico Healthnet. (Learn more from their website at: http://www.porticohealthnet.org/.)

Portico Healthnet has two programs of interest to us:

1. They can help individuals find out if they are eligible for one of Minnesota's health care programs, such as MinnesotaCare or Medical Assistance, assist with application forms, and help individuals through the enrollment process. This service is free, available state-wide, and can start with a simple phone call. They do have bi-lingual staff for Spanish, Hmong, and Somali speaking populations. The contact number is (651) 603-5100. Or, if you prefer, you can contact their Senior Communication Specialist Bill Gray (yes, that IS the Bill Gray who used to work at the Association—small world it is!) at (651) 603-5109, and he can provide you with information brochures.

2. If you have uninsured staff who are not eligible for one of Minnesota's programs, they can help you apply for the Portico Healthnet Program which offers access to a number of health care services (including primary care services and prescription coverage) through a network of providers. Due to their designated funding streams, this is not available state-wide—only in the metro area at this point in time. While there are waiting lists for this program in certain parts of the metro area, there are definitely enrollment slots available for individuals who live in south Minneapolis within the one-mile area around Abbott Northwestern Hospital; and for individuals who live in the Stillwater school district and/or who are already using Lakeview Hospital for health care services.

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