



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Portico Healthnet Named Partner in Increasing Health Care Access via Federal Grant
State Health Access Program Awards Minnesota Up to \$35 Million Over Five Years; Additional \$30 Million Expected from Non-Federal Sources.

ST. PAUL, MN (September 22, 2009) – Portico Healthnet, a non-profit agency working to reduce the number of people without coverage for health care services, has been named as a partner by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) in its recently announced effort to expand health care access to uninsured Minnesotans. The effort will be funded by a State Health Access Program grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The grant will award Minnesota up to \$35 million over the next five years, and will be supplemented by up to \$30 million in additional non-federal in-kind services. Portico is one of three partner entities named in the grant announcement. Additional partners include Duluth-based HealthShare and Alexandria-based PrimeWest Health.

“We were excited to work with DHS in applying for this grant, and are thrilled that the effort was successful,” said Portico Healthnet executive director Debra Holmgren. “We expect to be able to expand the capacity of our coverage program for uninsured individuals by approximately 30 percent over the next year as a direct result of these funds.”

Portico Healthnet works to find health care access options for uninsured Minnesotans. For those lower-income individuals ineligible for government programs, Portico offers its own primary and preventive health coverage made possible through financial commitments from local hospitals and health plans. The Portico coverage program significantly reduces uncompensated emergency room use by those it serves, improving community health and lowering the total cost of health care services.

“Grassroots solutions to health care access are more important than ever,” said Holmgren. “We’re pleased to be recognized via this grant by federal and state policymakers as part of the solution to the health care access puzzle.”

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About Portico Healthnet

Portico Healthnet is a nonprofit health and human services organization that helps uninsured Minnesotans access affordable health care coverage and services. During 2008, Portico outreach staff screened over 13,000 uninsured and underinsured individuals for eligibility under various health care coverage options. For those ineligible for public coverage, Portico offers its own need-based primary and preventive health care access program funded by grants and financial commitments from hospitals and health plans located in Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties. Portico Healthnet infused approximately \$8 million into Minnesota’s health care delivery system during 2008.

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