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## Portico Healthnet Takes Over Health Care Referrals

**489-CARE will continue to provide callers with information regarding low-cost local health services.**

July 2009 | by [Laura Kelly](#)

St. Paul nonprofit Neighborhood Health Care Network (NHCN) will no longer operate 489-CARE, a service that helps Minnesotans access health care services, regardless of their insurance status.

The service will now be operated by Portico Healthnet, another nonprofit agency in St. Paul. The two agencies say that the operational transfer will not affect 489-CARE callers. The services provided by the program will remain the same.

489-CARE provides callers throughout the state with information and advice on how to find affordable local medical, dental, and behavioral health services, regardless of their insurance status. When it began in the 1990s, 489-CARE was a referral service for community clinics in the Twin Cities, but it has since expanded into a statewide resource.

NHCN has recently been referring callers to Portico Healthnet for help in identifying health care coverage options. Earlier this year, NHCN and Portico began discussing a potential operational transfer.

“We have been pleased by the results of our successful partnership with Portico Healthnet over the years,” Walt Cooney, NHCN executive director, said in a statement. “And we’re confident that future operations of the 489-CARE service will be in good hands under Portico’s management and staff.”

Portico Healthnet screened more than 13,000 uninsured and underinsured people in 2008 to determine their health care eligibility. For those ineligible for public coverage, Portico offers a need-based and preventive health care access program that’s funded by grants and financial commitments from hospitals and health plans in Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, and Washington counties.

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