



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**August 7, 2013**

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**Residents in city & west suburbs to get help with federal health law**  
*Guidance available for people navigating Illinois' new insurance exchange*

Hillside, Ill. – Community residents who need help understanding and registering for President Obama's signature health care law, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), can have a counselor walk them through the process and help them select a plan that is best for their needs under a new partnership between the Proviso Township Mental Health Commission (PTMHC) and Healthcare Alternative Systems (HAS).

The Illinois Department of Public Health selected PTMHC and HAS to hire and train "In-Person Counselors" (IPCs) to provide outreach and enrollment assistance for residents in Chicago and surrounding communities. The counselors will meet with residents, answer basic questions and guide them through the enrollment process.

“There has been some confusion and uncertainty about the Affordable Healthcare Act,” PTMHC Executive Director Jesse D. Rosas said. “This is a great opportunity for us to reach out to those who have historically not qualified for insurance and to help those who are currently uninsured. We are excited to work with Healthcare Alternative Systems to help residents take advantage of this opportunity.”

The HAS/ PTMHC team was one of 44 community-based organizations around the state selected to conduct education and outreach and facilitate enrollment in the Affordable Care Act. Outreach will begin in August, with an emphasis on reaching the uninsured, those eligible for subsidized coverage, non-English speaking households, the disabled, the elderly and the mentally ill.

“HAS and the PTMHC have worked separately and together for years to increase behavioral services for Cook County populations with a special focus on minority populations,” HAS CEO Marco E. Jacome said. “We are thrilled to be a part of this important and historic program that will literally save the lives of the many children, adults and families we both serve.”

HAS/PTMHC will begin pre-enrollment activities and conduct outreach to targeted towns and populations starting later this month. Enrollment in the program, known as the Illinois Health Insurance Marketplace, will begin on October 1, 2013. Coverage will start on January 1, 2014.

The PTMHC/HAS team was awarded a \$600,000 grant after a competitive application process. The team submitted a detailed plan describing how it will use the funds to conduct outreach and enrollment

assistance. In the coming weeks and months, staffers from the HAS/PTMH team will take part in intensive training to prepare them to educate residents about their health care options.

“One of our most important goals is to reach those who have never had access to health care,” PTMHC President Mike Corrigan said. “This will truly improve the overall health of the people of our community.”

**About PTMHC**

*The Proviso Township Mental Health Commission provides services to over 6,700 individuals in need of mental health, substance abuse and developmental disabilities services through the 26 agencies the commission supports. PTMHC helps victims of domestic violence by supporting agencies that provide legal assistance, shelter and transportation. The commission and its member agencies also provide a continuum of supportive services for seniors as well as help for at-risk youth with services for runaways, teen pregnancy prevention and gangs.*

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