



NEWS RELEASE
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COMMUNITY HEALTH OPTIONS PARTNERS WITH MAINE'S AREA AGENCIES ON AGING TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES

Lewiston, ME – Community Health Options has entered into a partnership with the Maine Area Agencies on Aging to provide Enhanced Options Counseling to people with complex, chronic health conditions and suspected or identified socio-economic barriers to improving their health. Seniors Plus, the Area Agency on Aging (“AAA”) serving Androscoggin County, is the lead agency among the five AAAs throughout Maine in this statewide partnership.

This partnership extends the reach of the Health Options care managers to its Members and provides wrap-around services needed to improve health outcomes. Services begin with a review of the participants’ nutrition, social supports, in-home care needs, medications, cognitive functioning, and environmental factors impacting health.

“Early in 2015 the Maine Area Agencies on Aging approached Health Options with an offer to participate in a pilot demonstration project to provide enhanced in-home support to 25 high-risk Members currently engaged with our care managers,” said Maggie Kelley, assistant vice president, medical services for Health Options. “Each Area Agency on Aging in Maine provided Enhanced Options Counseling to approximately five Health Options Members in their respective communities. Although it was a small sample size and the duration of the pilot was limited, preliminary outcome data suggests a positive impact to the health and wellbeing of some of our most vulnerable Members who were extremely grateful to have the additional support of a trusted community resource.”

“The fact that our team is engaging Health Options Members through multiple interactions by phone or in person to do a complete assessment allows us to understand Members’ specific needs, identify barriers, and wrap much needed services around them to get them back on track,” said Seniors Plus CEO Betsy Sawyer-Manter.

A good example of the program’s impact is provided by an Androscoggin resident, Mary, who was facing multiple difficulties threatening her health and independence:



Mary, a Community Health Options Member, was connected with Health Options' care management and population health services after multiple visits to the Emergency Department. Working with a Health Options care manager, Mary was able to get the medical care she needed. With the help of her care manager, Mary also was referred to Seniors Plus. "I learned techniques to help me live a healthy life with a chronic condition. I learned how to do exercises to build up my strength and how to eat healthier," said Mary. One of the biggest hurdles was transportation. Today, Mary has a learner's permit and is saving money to start driver education classes and hopes that one day she can buy a car. "If it weren't for Health Options and Seniors Plus I would still be in and out of the hospital, discouraged and frustrated. This has made a huge difference for me and my husband."

This partnership is designed to improve health outcomes, reduce the cost of care, and improve the patient experience of care. "The Area Agencies on Aging are recognized experts in community care for older adults and adults with disabilities," noted Community Health Options CEO Kevin Lewis. "This partnership is a model that promises measurable health outcomes improvement for our Members and helps move Maine towards Triple Aim achievement."

***About Seniors Plus** – SeniorsPlus covers Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford counties, where it is the Agency on Aging and the Aging and Disability Resource Center. The agency focuses on older adults, adults with disabilities, and families, and offers a network of support, including information and assistance, short-term case management, Medicare counseling, caregiver support and respite, prevention education, and Options Counseling. It provides nutritional services including Meals on Wheels and community dining in our tri-county, largely rural territory.*

***About Community Health Options** – Community Health Options (Health Options) is a non-profit, Member-led health plan providing comprehensive, Member-focused health insurance benefits for individuals, families, and businesses. Health Options is a Consumer Operated and Oriented Plan (CO-OP) licensed in Maine and New Hampshire that is dedicated to providing affordable, high-quality health benefits through productive partnerships with Members, businesses, and a broad network of providers. For more information about Health Options, visit the website: HealthOptions.org.*