

Healthy choice for healthy company

Health Advocate relocates out of growing concerns



By CARL ROTENBURG
For The Times Herald

WHITPAIN — An advocacy and assistance firm for health concerns has moved to a new office at 450 Sentry Parkway to give the 19-persona staff a professional work environment.

Health Advocate moved into the former 8,000 square-foot office of Genomics Collaborative Inc in early May, said Michael J. Cardillo, the president, CEO and co-founder of Health Advocate.

The Whitpain office lease included the former company's telephone system and furniture.

Health Advocate was started by former Aetna executives including Cardillo, Dr. Abbie N. Leibowitz, chief medical officer;

Tom Masci, CFO, Martin B. Rosen, chief marketing officer, David Rocchino; and Dan Messina.

The six executives invested \$1 million over the past two years, and a group of 12 outside investors supplied an additional \$1 million in capital.

Health Advocate sells its health advocacy services to employers who provide it to their workers. Clients can get help with medical billing problems, finding the right doctor or medical service and navigating through a complicated health care system.

The service allows client companies to comply with new federal privacy regulations and give assistance to their workers, Cardillo said.

"Navigating your way through the health care system is difficult," he said. "No one is helping individuals do that."

The Health Advocate staff handles an average of 10 cases a day. The company has signed up 169 client companies with 90,000 employees. With family members and the parents' of employees, the company currently serves 360,000 people.

The client list includes J & B Software of Whitpain, with 150 workers; District Council 33 & 47 in Philadelphia with 16,000 municipal workers; Advanta of Horsham, with 880 workers; the Delaware Valley Trust of Willow Grove, with 1,750 workers; and Lower Gwynedd Township with 50 workers.

One of the reasons the township manager of Lower Gwynedd likes the service is that it covers more than the employee's immediate family.

"What was appealing was that it involves not only the immediate family but also the parents," said Larry Comunale, the township manager of Lower Gwynedd. "I thought that was a plus."

"We've had a very good experience. One employee needed some help and they were very good in getting information to her. We have had some positive experience with it."

Health Advocate provides cost savings to employers because their work frees up employees to do their job.

"We save money for the employer on the productivity side," said Rosen, the chief marketing officer. "We estimate there is a three-to-one cost recovery for our services."

Health Advocate charges \$1.50 to \$3 per employee per month for its services.

Before moving to Whitpain, the company had small offices in Horsham and, then, West Conshohocken.

In January 2002, Health Advocate had attracted 10 companies as it geared up its marketing campaign. By January 2003, the company had attracted 110 company clients.

"We gained 43 clients in the last two months," said Rosen.

