Business Alliance for Community Health

The mission of the Business Alliance for Community Health is to provide philanthropic support for ECHN and a networking environment, while addressing current health issues facing businesses and their employees.

"...everyone wins when people take care of their health—the insurer, the employer and the employee all win."

Neil Garland
Senior Account Manager, Aetna

Spotlight
Aetna's Neil Garland: Working for Community Wellness

Senior Account Manager Neil Garland and his company, Aetna, want to make a positive difference in the community by encouraging health and wellness. ECHN's Business Alliance for Community Health (BACH) is one way they're fulfilling that commitment.

In January 2011, the 13-year Aetna veteran signed up for BACH for several reasons. One reason is that the two organizations share a similar mission. "Both ECHN and Aetna are here, at the end of the day, to make a positive difference in the health of the community," says Neil.

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Another reason is ECHN's work. "We see the good work ECHN does in the community. If you're east of the river, ECHN is a huge presence. And we have thousands of Aetna employees and insureds who utilize ECHN," he says.

Listening to Business Leaders

A third reason to join BACH is to listen. "BACH is a unique opportunity to truly listen to and understand the leaders in the local business community," Neil explains. "It's easy for an insurance company to just focus on insurance. Being a BACH member lets us really listen to the larger landscape of our community and be better in business."

BACH has also given Neil another way to communicate the new health and wellness mindset many insurance companies now share. BACH chose Neil as the keynote speaker for a presentation on wellness. "That was a great opportunity to talk about the positive relationship companies can have with their insurance carrier," Neil says. "I was able to tell the audience about the many health education resources they can receive from Aetna or other insurance companies."

Education on Preventive Care

The most important thing Neil focuses on is educating people, employers and employees, on getting preventive care. He believes everyone wins when people take care of their health—the insurer, the employer and the employee all win.

For example, Neil says only about 25% of adults have routine preventive health exams. The rates for many illnesses and diseases could decrease if more people had regular preventive health exams, which include a number of preventive services that are covered at 100% under the Affordable Care Act. Helping employers encourage more employees to have appropriate health screenings and exams is a task high on Neil's priority list.

Another aspect of Neil's work is raising awareness of the many free healthcare resources that insurers now make available—free resources like online wellness programs, health coaches and nurses.

Neil's on a mission. BACH's here to help. And by the way, have you had a preventive health exam within the last year?

Companies interested in the Business Alliance for Community Health should contact Stan Kontogiannis, ECHN Senior Development Officer, at 860.647.4754 or skontogiannis@echn.org. For a list of BACH members please go to echn.org/bach.