

Amherst Chamber of Commerce

First to create a Health Insurance Brokerage division

Chambers of commerce and trade associations have been providing health insurance for small businesses in the region for many years.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the only place a small business with less than 10 employees could access group health insurance was through one of these agencies.

“It was a great opportunity for business and provided organizations with expanded memberships and ancillary dollars to dedicate to programming,” said Colleen C. DiPirro, Amherst Chamber of Commerce president and CEO. “However, that opportunity no longer has the advantages it once did. Costs are esca-

lating dramatically, and health care options with the available plans are dwindling.”

DiPirro said the Amherst Chamber of Commerce, in response to the feedback received from the business community, is the first chamber in the region to create a Health Insurance Brokerage Division. She said businesses of all sizes now can meet with the Amherst Chamber and have a plan designed for them that meets the needs of both the employer and the employees.

Customized plans are available for Independent Health, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Community Blue, Univera and United Health Insurance.

“Unlike other brokers, the Amherst Chamber takes into consideration the entire profitability of the business, consistent with our mission of providing the tools for business prosperity,” DiPirro said.

She said the Chamber is currently meeting with existing eligible subscribers to develop plans that are more cost-effective than

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— Colleen C. DiPirro, Chamber president, CEO

their present contracts. Additionally, subscribers no longer have to pay the \$12-\$25 quarterly administrative fee charged on the typical “chamber plans.”

“Response to our new subsidiary has been overwhelmingly positive. Our ability to save firms hundreds or thousands of dollars annually while providing them with the opportunity to select the coverage they need — not just choose from a predetermined menu — is attractive to our members,” DiPirro said.

An additional advantage to the new subsidiary, Benefit Solutions,

is the Chamber’s full-time, professional staff to work with employers and human resource specialists that cuts down on operational expenses for businesses.

The Chamber does all the work including meeting with the employees to explain the policies and their value and walk them through the enrollment process, DiPirro said, adding that currently, the chamber is working with employers representing two to 2,000 employees.

For more information, call the Amherst Chamber of Commerce at 632-6905.

Tennyson Court under new management

Peregrine Health Management Company was recently approved by the Department of Health to be the new manager of Tennyson Court, an 84-bed, assisted-living community in Williamsville.

Stephen S. Bowman, president of Peregrine, acknowledged the outstanding job done by developers Bernie and Michael Becker.

Tennyson Court will be the third assisted-living community for seniors run by Peregrine in Western New York. Plans are in place to open Pilgrim’s Landing in Amherst in March.

“Peregrine will build upon the tradition of caring previously established at Tennyson Court, with the support of the excellent care staff that is already in place,” Bowman said.

The company plans to offer services including personal care supervision, three nutritious meals per day prepared by a chef, professionally trained care staff, housekeeping and laundry services.



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