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Network Health appoints three new directors

Network Health recently announced the appointment of Steven Kostos as director of contracting. Kostos will lead Network Health's efforts to expand and enhance network relationships to ensure member access to care. He will also oversee provider contracting efforts with all hospitals, physicians, community health centers, behavioral health providers, and ancillary providers.

"Steve joins Network Health with more than a decade of health care contracting experience," said Paul Burke, senior director of network management for Network Health. "He brings strong leadership, innovative contracting approaches, and a passion for creating a strong provider base for Network Health members in order to give them the highest quality of health care possible."

Kostos previously served as a director of provider contracting at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA), where he worked on the development and execution of global contracting strategies and ensured implementation of new contracting initiatives.

Prior to joining BCBSMA, Kostos served as manager of provider contracting for Harvard Pilgrim Health Care (HPHC). In this role, he was responsible for strategic contract development and successful negotiation of HPHC's Massachusetts network, which spanned more than 60 hospitals and several thousand physicians.

Kostos earned a Master of Education from Suffolk University and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Salem State College.

James Merola was appointed as director of quality. Merola is responsible for overseeing the plan's quality improvement plan, and within this capacity, he will serve as Network Health's quality officer; oversee the development of the plan's annual improvement plan; and monitor, develop and direct improvement projects.

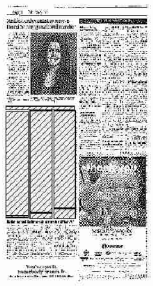
In addition, Merola will help Network Health meet MassHealth and Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector Authority requirements on quality initiatives and objectives.

"We are excited to welcome Jim to Network Health," said Dr. Pano Yeracaris, vice president and chief medical officer for Network Health. "Jim joins Network Health with extensive experience in the health care industry. Jim's expertise in data analysis and data integrity, paired with strong managerial and team-building skills, gives us confidence in his ability to strengthen our quality team and spearhead our improvement projects."

Merola previously served as senior vice president for sales and marketing for Court Square Group, where he provided consulting and support services for life sciences organizations, including audit services, business process design, hosting of IT services, and service management using best practices. In this capacity, Merola built a sales team to develop a life sciences practice while launching new life sciences product lines.

Prior to joining the Court Square Group, Merola served as vice president, strategic partnerships, for Sentillion. In this role, he evaluated, created, and modified formal relationships with technology, co-marketing and service partners, and was responsible for revitalizing relationships with at-risk hospital association partners in order to re-establish strong working relationships.

Merola earned a Doctorate in Psychology from Boston University, a Master of Education from Les-



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ley University, and a Bachelor of Arts in mathematics from College of the Holy Cross.

Network Health Appoints Director of Provider Relations

Lastly, Akinola Ogungbadero was appointed as director of provider relations. In this position, Ogungbadero will establish and maintain a high-quality, cost-effective provider network that supports Network Health's strategic and operational initiatives and fosters strong provider partnerships and provider community presence to positively influence member services and access to care.

"Akin joins Network Health with a unique background, having spent more than 20 years working in local hospitals and community health centers," said Burke. "His first-hand experience is a great benefit to Network Health as he can offer tremendous insight as we continue to build and maintain strong relationships with health centers and providers throughout the state."

Ogungbadero previously served as chief financial officer and chief operating officer for South Boston Community Health Center, where he led an organizational financial turnaround, a patient access redesign, labor negotiations, and overall operations improvement efforts.

Prior to joining South Boston Community Health Center, Ogungbadero served as director of business operations and reimbursement for Dimock Community Health Center. In this role, he was responsible for the day-to-day technical, management, and training functions within the health center's practice management/business operations and patient financial services departments.

Ogungbadero earned his Bachelor of Science with a concentration in business administration and a Master of Public Administration with a concentration in health administration from Suffolk University.

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