

## HomeCare Options starts wellness program

HomeCare Options, the not-for-profit home care agency in Paterson that recently announced the introduction of a unique wellness program, has received a grant from Provident Bank Foundation.

The \$2,000 grant will support benchmark physicals for patients at area nutrition sites in Passaic County. These physicals will kick off a long-range study that will include the use of specially designed kiosks to monitor the health of primarily elderly residents. The home care agency is presently exploring additional grant opportunities.

"This grant will help fund a basic part of our program, the physical exams, which will allow us to study over time how regular self health checks, using these kiosks, impact on people," said

Ken Wessel, executive director of the Paterson-based non-profit agency. "This program, conceived as a partnership between the public and private sectors, is intended to provide the kind of wellness services that will help people stay well longer so they won't need home care or enter nursing homes.

Working with the county's office of the aging, HomeCare Options will be offering its wellness services to seniors on an individual basis, as well as to senior housing projects and organizations seeking to maintain the health of their members. This will include specialized programs, educational offerings and health screenings.

"Wellness is taking on greater importance for the simple fact that people are living longer today," said Mary Kuzinski, director of the Pas-

saic County office of the aging. "We believe programs like this have the potential to impact greatly on the lifestyles of older people."

Plans call for the wellness service to encompass an array of program offerings ranging, for example, from a falls risk assessment program for individuals or housing projects concerned about falls, to screenings and nutritional counseling for diabetes. Funding will be determined on an individual basis.

HomeCare Options services families in Passaic and Bergen counties. The agency has over 380 employees and performs over 500,000 hours of home care service annually. For more information on its wellness services, call 973-523-1224.