

Nev. paid insurance for 30,000 people who received no health care

By Anjeanette Damon, Reno Gazette-Journal

Lying under a bridge on a freezing night in February, Bill George had an idea of how close to death he might be even if he didn't want to admit it to himself.

By the time Lisa Lee, a case manager for Northern Nevada HOPES, found George, he was likely hours from death. Frostbite had eaten away at his feet so badly that they hung from exposed tendons.

Although George, 52, is homeless, he has health insurance through the state Medicaid program for severely low-income individuals. His Medicaid insurance, paid for by state and federal tax dollars, is through Health Plan of Nevada.

But George never received his insurance card, despite listing the downtown homeless shelter as his address. Nor did he receive the welcome phone call for new enrollees, nor the packet of information explaining how his managed care organization works.

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