


CAHS Seeks VITA Volunteers.....p2
 Census Results from SPMp3
 Free NAMI-CT Presentationsp3
 Act to Protect Unemp. Benefitsp3

CABHN FEVER

MED-Connect



Medicaid for Employees with Disabilities, now known as MED-Connect, provides medical assistance to employed individuals with disabilities. Total income from work and other benefits must be below \$75,000 per year. Some individuals may pay a monthly premium for this coverage. In general, an eligible person with a disability who is employed or becomes employed and who pays employment taxes may qualify for MED-Connect without the use of spend down while earning more income than is allowed under other Medicaid coverage groups.

If you want more information or to download a paper application on MED-Connect, go to the website www.ct.gov/med; or call 1-866-844-1903 or 211 Infoline.

Clothes Without Borders



IRIS CT (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services) in New Haven has a second-hand clothing boutique available to help recent immigrants and refugees. Clothes without Borders features a wide variety of high-quality clothing and accessories for women, men, & children at low prices. They also offer original artwork by artisans in the refugee community, in addition to furniture & collectibles.

The boutique is now open Tuesday through Sunday from 11:00 am- 5:00 pm and is located at 900 Grand Ave. in New Haven, two blocks from State St.

Volunteers are needed to staff the store all the time. All you need do is volunteer for a few hours. Any help you can give is appreciated. All profits go toward IRIS.

Call Now to Register for CL&P Credit

CL&P has set aside \$30 million for its customers who lost power for at least seven days during storm Alfred. Call 888-566-9257 between December 7th through Jan. 30th to apply. The benefit will be a bill credit and is expected to be between \$100 and \$200 for each household affected.

If you have already contacted 211 to apply for a reimbursement, it is not necessary to reapply.

CT City has Highest Level of Income Inequality

Statistically speaking, the most unequal city or metro region in America is in Connecticut.

According the Census Bureau's Gini Index, the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk metro area has the most income inequality of any area in the U.S. The area's bottom 20% earn an average of \$17,000, while the top 5% take home \$823,000 a year. *For more information, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/acsbr10-02.pdf>.*



Some Facts On Keeping Year Round Utility Service

► Life-Threatening Shutoffs

If the life of someone in your household would be in danger without service, electric and gas companies are not allowed to shut off your service, in any season, even if you owe them money. Your doctor must sign a utility form saying a shut off would be "life-threatening."

► Shutoff where a baby under 24 months old is being discharged from a hospital

If you are low income and there is a baby under 24 months old living in your home who was hospitalized, and the hospital discharge papers say utility service is needed for "the health and well being" of the baby, utility service may not be shut off. If service is shut off, it must be turned back on.

► The utility company cannot shut off your service on certain days.

A utility cannot shut off your service on:

- Saturdays,
- Sundays,
- Fridays (unless their business office is open on Saturday),
- legal holidays,
- the day before a legal holiday,
- within 1 hour before their business office closes, or any other times their office is closed.

Exception: In an emergency, such as a fire hazard, they can **shut off your service anytime.**

To learn more about keeping year round utility service, go to: <http://ctlawhelp.org/resolve-utility-service-shut-off>

What are Dept. of Social Services Business Hours?

DSS offices statewide are now open from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. The receptionists work until 4:30 so if a client enters the DSS office before 4 p.m., the client should be helped by the receptionists. Between 4 p.m.–4:30 p.m., the receptionists only deal with remaining clients and take internal calls.



Quinebaug Valley Community College's STRIDE Program was selected as one of the 10 Finalist Winners in the Workforce Development category for the 2012 Bellwether Award at the upcoming Community College Futures Assembly January 28-31 in Orlando, Florida. The Bellwether is a prestigious award given to colleges with innovative programs in the categories of Instructional Programs & Services; Planning, Governance & Finance; and Workforce Development. This is the second nomination for the STRIDE Program.

As a finalist winner, the STRIDE staff will present their program on "Breaking Down the Walls: A Pathway to the American Dream". Joining them will be Dr. Ross Tomlin, President of Quinebaug Valley Community College, a member of the State of CT Board of Regents for Higher Education, Dr. Patrick Hynes, Director of the Best Practices Unit for the CT Department of Correction and a STRIDE graduate who will share her journey through incarceration and recovery. The winners in each category will be announced in the closing session.

Get Your Flu Shot This Winter!

October marks the beginning of flu season. This year's vaccine protects against seasonal flu and H1N1. The Centers for Disease Control encourages everyone over 6 months of age to get the vaccine, especially those 65 and older, younger than 2 years and anyone with a chronic health condition. For more information, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org, enter your town and "immunizations" under Search by Service Keyword.

Free Legal Help For Low-Income Native Americans

Low-income Native Americans in Connecticut may be able to obtain free help on civil legal matters. The Native American Unit of Pine Tree Legal Assistance, based in Maine, has a modest grant from the Legal Services Corporation to provide services in Connecticut. The Native American Unit attorney makes outreach trips. On Tuesday, December 20 the attorney will make a presentation on Consumer Rights at the Connecticut Indian Council in North Stonington. The Native American Unit can provide legal help on Indian Law issues (such as the Indian Child Welfare Act and race discrimination) as well as general poverty law issues (such as Debt Collection). Because of limited resources, the Native American Unit is not able to provide direct representation in Connecticut courts. But they can provide limited assistance, and they may be able to make referrals to legal service providers in Connecticut. The toll free phone number is 1-877-213-5630.

Report: "Invisible Students"

A new report, "Invisible Students" was released on December 15, 2011. A Better Way Foundation and the CT Pushout Research and Organizing Project invite you to access this report at www.ctprop.org.

About "Invisible Students"

There are thousands of young people across the state of Connecticut pursuing their education outside traditional high schools. This report examines the systemic removal of struggling students from traditional high schools and explores their experiences and outcomes in the alternative and adult education programs they attend.

As a follow-up to its release, local community conversations will be held around the state in the months of January and February. As of publication of this newsletter, the dates are still pending.

(A Better Way Foundation and the CT Pushout Research and Organizing Project)



Connecticut Association for Human Services seeks VITA Volunteers

Become a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance preparer and help your community by devoting a few hours each week to a VITA site. You'll be trained to use Internal Revenue Service software and assist clients in preparing and filing their taxes. VITA sites are available throughout the state and offer high-quality tax preparation at no charge. This network of VITA sites is especially important as the 2011 tax year is the first for the Connecticut EITC!

CAHS is helping recruit volunteers for sites in Fairfield, New Haven, and Litchfield Counties. Register to volunteer in your area and sign up for tax trainings with the IRS by visiting the volunteer website at <http://ctvita.volunteerhub.com/SignIn.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fDefault.aspx>.

Potential volunteers from the Greater Hartford area, Tolland or Windham Counties should visit <http://habc.volunteerhub.com/SignIn.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fDefault.aspx>.

For more information, please contact Shannon Houston shouston@cahs.org, or (860) 951-2212, ext. 225.

Census Releases Results from Supplemental Poverty Measure

In 2010, the Census attempted to better ascertain the extent of poverty in America by using a Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), which would address concerns with the current measure for determining the federal poverty threshold. The official "poverty line" is a set pre-tax income level, established in 1969 at essentially three times what was considered necessary to afford a "minimal, but adequate" amount of food. The measure has been adjusted for family size and inflation, but has otherwise remained unchanged for more than 50 years.

In contrast, the SPM attempts a more holistic assessment of a family's expenses. It takes the average between the 30th and 36th percentiles of spending by a family of three on food, clothing, shelter, and utilities, and adjusts this amount to reflect other necessary expenses, such as child care, federal income taxes, FICA payroll taxes, out-of-pocket medical expenses, and work-related expenses such as commuting costs, uniforms, and tools. The SPM also accounts for resources available to low-income families through government programs, such as the

EITC, SNAP (food stamps), housing subsidies, school lunch programs, heating assistance, and WIC (food assistance for women, infants, and children). Finally, unlike the existing official poverty rate, the SPM does adjust for regional differences in prices and costs.

The SPM showed a higher number of Americans living in poverty (49 million, or 16%) as compared to the federal poverty measure (46.6 million, or 15.2%). Although this difference is significant, what is even more telling is the difference the SPM reported when comparing the number of Americans living below 200% of the FPL – it showed the number rose from 34% to 47.5%, or nearly half of all Americans.

Why is there such a difference? One reason is that the official poverty line's method of setting the poverty threshold to three times the minimum spent on food presupposes that the growth in all expenses other than food will remain proportionate to the growth in food costs. This is simply inaccurate.

The Census Bureau acknowledges that the new measure is a "work in progress," though it is still believed to be a more accurate measure of poverty than the current federal

Act Now to Protect Unemployment Benefits

Expiration of the federal unemployment insurance program is looming on December 31. If Congress fails to act, nearly 2 million unemployed workers will lose federal unemployment benefits in the month of January. Millions more would be cut off in subsequent months - more than 6 million during 2012.

Tell your Senators and Representatives to renew the full federal unemployment insurance program for 2012. Show your support by going to http://www.nelp.org/page/content/click_to_call_renew_ui_2012/?nocdn=1.

According to Connecticut Voices for Children, there are nearly 170,000

unemployed workers in Connecticut. UI benefits are an especially important support for working families affected by unemployment. Nearly 50 percent of Connecticut's unemployed have been out of work for six months or more - the 5th highest rate of long-term unemployment in the country; the outlook is far worse for Latinos, African-Americans, and the least-educated. As more and more families edge towards economic insecurity, UI benefits are an increasingly important source of income. While statewide unemployment peaked in 2009, UI benefits kept an estimated 36,000 people out of poverty in Connecticut.

Free Presentations Are Available on Medicare Part D Update

Does your agency serve clients who are on the Medicare Part D (Drug Plan) and would like assistance paying for their prescription medications?

The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Connecticut (NAMI-CT), through a grant from the CT Department of Social Services, will provide free "Medicare Part D" update presentations. These presentations include information on the Medicare Low Income Subsidy (LIS), the Medicare Savings Plan (MSP) programs, as well as the new Medicare Annual Wellness Visit.

NAMI-CT is looking for venues in the Hartford County area to host a presentation, available in both English and Spanish.

At the end of the free, 30 minute presentation, consumers will know if they qualify for these programs and application assistance will be available.

A limited number of presentations can be provided, so if your agency is interested, please contact NAMI-CT as soon as possible!

For more information, contact Thomas Burr at NAMI-CT, (860) 882-0236, ext. 28, or email at: policystaff@namict.org.

State of CT Office of the Healthcare Advocate (OHA)

OHA provides advocacy services, at no charge, to individuals who have been denied coverage or a claim by their insurance company for a service that is medically necessary; educates consumers in the insurance plan selection process; and proposes legislation to remove unnecessary barriers to healthcare access under managed care plans.

Contact OHA: 1-866-HMO-4446, Healthcare.advocate@ct.gov <http://www.ct.gov/oha/site/default.asp>

Internet Essentials from Comcast Offers Low-Cost Internet to Low-Income Households



Comcast wants to bring the power of the Internet to more students and families across the country. That's why they created Internet Essentials to offer home Internet service for only \$9.95 a month.

To qualify for \$9.95 a month Internet service and a low-cost computer, your household must meet all these criteria:

- Be located where Comcast offers Internet service
- Have at least one child receiving free school lunches through the National School Lunch Program
- Have not subscribed to Comcast Internet service within the last 90 days

- Not have an overdue Comcast bill or unreturned equipment

To apply, call 1-855-8-INTERNET (1-855-846-8376) to request an application. Comcast will mail you an application. Complete and return it, along with lunch program documents from your child's school. You will be notified by mail about the status of your application. Allow 7-10 days for a response.

**Would you like to sign
up to receive CABHN
Fever on-line? Do you have
a contribution for CABHN
Fever? Great!
Email Ellen Small Billard
(ESmall@larcc.org)
or call 860-278-5688 x208**

Upcoming CABHN/FESN Meeting

**The next meeting
will be
January 20, 2012**

Location:

**To Be Announced
9:30 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.**



**We wish you a safe
and**

Happy Holiday!

The Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs (CABHN) is a statewide network of individuals, community groups and organizations which supports and promotes advocacy on low-income issues. For more information, please call (860) 278-5688.

Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG
U S POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD CT
PERMIT NO 3377

**Legal Assistance Resource Center of CT and
CABHN (Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs)**
44 Capitol Ave., Suite 301
Hartford, CT 06106