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CABHN FEVER

Consumer Health Action Network

Do you worry about the cost of health care? Are you sure your plan will always cover your needs? Are you uninsured?

Tip Sheets Are Now Available

Trying to get good health care in Connecticut can be frustrating and can leave consumers with many questions. Fortunately, the Consumer Health Action Network has tip sheets to help! Please call the Consumer Health Action Network at 203-772-2817 or toll-free at 888-873-4585 or visit www.cthealthpolicy.org/action to obtain copies of these tip sheets.

Tip
Tip
Tip Sheet Topics

What can I do about hospital debt?
How do I fill out a HUSKY application?
How can I reduce my prescription drug costs?
I'm pregnant, what do I do now?
How can I be a better caregiver?
Are there ways to reduce my health care costs?

...and more

Decisions are being made about your health and your money. Here's how you can make a difference. Contact the Consumer Health Action Network (CHAN) at www.cthealthconsumer.org or toll free at (888) 873-4585. Remember, decision makers hear from HMOs, doctors, hospitals, employers and lobbyists. Let your voice be heard too. Get involved.

Do You Have a Criminal Record?

Don't give up hope of getting a job even if you have a criminal record. The publication "Is Your Criminal Record Keeping You From Working?" describes your rights when applying for (and keeping) a job, and explains how your criminal record can affect your ability to get certain jobs and licenses. For example, you will be automatically disqualified from getting a job as a taxi driver if you have a certain criminal record.

To check out this publication, go to www.larcc.org and click on self help material, then employment. If you have any questions, call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 or 860-344-0380.

How to Apply for a Pardon

A pardon means that you have been officially excused for your crime, but you are not cleared of guilt for the crime. A pardon can be absolute (total) or conditional (partial). If you are granted an absolute pardon for any conviction, that charge will be removed/erased from your record.

You can apply for a pardon if at least 5 years have passed (new law starting October 1, 2005 requires 10 years for certain drug crimes) since you completed your most recent sentence (including any period of probation). To apply, you must complete a long application (there are very strict deadlines) and you may have to go to a hearing. In Connecticut,

CT Food Bank's Walk Against Hunger

The Walk Against Hunger is held each spring in New Haven and Waterbury to raise money and awareness about the problem of hunger.

In 2006, individuals, teams, donors and corporate sponsors raised more than \$130,000. Whether you walk on your own or with a team, every dollar you raise helps provide food - and hope - to someone in need.

Join one or both Walks:

·The 2nd annual Walk Against Hunger in Waterbury, Sunday, April 29; 1:00 p.m. in Library Park at the corner of Grand and Meadow Streets.

·The 31st annual Walk Against Hunger in New Haven, Sunday, May 6; 1:00 p.m. in East Rock Park at the corner of Orange and Cold Spring Streets.

For walk details, including new online registration and free fundraising pages, go to www.ctfoodbank.org. If your company or organization is interested in becoming a sponsor of the Walk Against Hunger, contact Stefanie Stevens, Special Events Coordinator, at (203) 469-5000, ext. 302 or Walk@ctfoodbank.org.


If you'd like to volunteer at either Walk Against Hunger, contact Kim Damien, Volunteer Coordinator, at (203) 469-5000, ext. 311, or kdamien@ctfoodbank.org.

applications are accepted and hearings are held at least once every three months.

To request an application, contact: Board of Pardons & Paroles, 55 West Main St., Waterbury, CT 06702; or call (203) 805-6605. Applications are

(See Pardons p. 2)

New Haven Diaper Bank Meets Basic Need

 The New Haven Diaper Bank is a growing agency addressing a basic need of families living in poverty. This all volunteer organization is modeled on the successful national network of food banks.

The Diaper Bank centralizes the fundraising and distribution of free diapers to poor families through

existing service providers including local food pantries, soup kitchens, daycare centers, social service agencies and shelters. For more information on distribution, making donations or for help starting your agency's own diaper bank, call 203-843-5372 or visit

www.newhavendiaperbank.org.

The Facts

- Safety net programs, like Food Stamps and WIC, which are supposed to provide poor children with basic necessities do not cover diapers.
- An adequate supply of diapers can cost over \$100/monthly
- Infants need up to 12 diapers a day; toddlers about 8 diapers a day.
- In low-income households babies may spend the whole day or longer in a single diaper.
- Cloth is not an option for most poor people. Most childcare centers require parents to provide disposable diapers. Furthermore, most people living in poverty do not have easy, affordable access to washing facilities.
- The monthly cost to distribute 50,000 diapers is \$7,500.


CT Tax Threshold Out of Step

The number of low-income Connecticut families required to pay state income taxes will continue to grow each year, unless the state increases the "tax threshold," the income level at which families begin paying taxes, taking into account all universally-available exemptions and credits. Of the 42 states, included the District of Columbia, that levy a state income tax, Connecticut is one of just two states that has not adjusted its tax threshold upward since 1991. As a result, more low-income families have been paying the tax, and without legislative action, Connecticut will be taxing families at the poverty level within a few years. An issue brief from CT Voices and a national report from the Center on Budget and Polity Priorities are available at www.kidslink.org/pub_detail_342.html.

Pardons (cont. from p.1)

also available for download from the Dept. of Corrections website (www.ct.gov/doc) then link to Board of Pardons and Paroles). For help or questions about mistakes in your criminal record, or about the pardons process, call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 or 860-344-0380.

Plant a Row For The Hungry

 Calling all gardeners! Connecticut Food Bank's 2007 *Plant A Row for the Hungry* campaign encourages everyone to plant an extra row of produce for donation to local hunger-relief efforts. For your free packet of vegetable seeds (donated by Seeds for Change) and brochure, send a self-addressed, stamped (first-class) envelope to CFB, c/o Plant A Row, P.O. Box 8686, New Haven, CT, 06531.


Looking for a Summer Job?





Camp Courant has openings for summer positions. View complete job descriptions and download an application at www.campcourant.org To request an application packet, email [Andrea\(awilliams@campcourant.com\)](mailto:Andrea(awilliams@campcourant.com)) with your name and address or call (860) 241-6320.


Hartford's Camp Courant is the largest free day camp in the nation, serving up to 2,000 Hartford children during the summer season. Children ages 5 through 12, who live in the city of Hartford, participate in a variety of recreational, educational and cultural programs at the campsite in Farmington. Transportation, meals and health care are provided to every child. Contributions from the community are needed each year to maintain this free summer program for Hartford children.


Can you help out with any of these wish list items for Camp Courant?


 Arts & crafts tables: 10 round tables that will seat 8-10 campers.


 Baseball gloves, basketballs, playground balls and volleyballs: for sports and playground activities.

 Children's sneakers, t-shirts and/or shorts: new or used.

 Large movie screen(s): for permanent installation in one or more of the camp's pavilions.

 Movies and videos (VHS): for children ages 5-12.

 New underwear: for boys and girls in small and medium sizes. These are needed for the health center.

 Picnic tables: 10 recycled plastic, maintenance-free tables for our picnic area, which are used by nearly 1,000 children and staff daily.

 Television Sets: New and used.

To make a donation, please contact Beth Gibbs at (860) 241-3674 or bgibbs@campcourant.org



Federal Budget Moves Through Process

The U. S. Senate and House of Representatives each passed budget resolutions before the Congressional break in April. These budget proposals have provisions which are significantly different from President Bush's proposals. These three different proposals will have to be reconciled before a budget for the federal fiscal year 2007-08, which begins in October, is adopted.

By early May, the House and Senate plan to have completed work on their joint budget resolution. At that time, over \$930 billion in discretionary funds will be divided among Appropriations Subcommittees and the distribution of money to individual programs will begin.

Key Points in the House and Senate Budget Resolutions:

Both the House and Senate proposals fall well short of the \$450 billion that advocates projected was needed for annually appropriated domestic programs. \$450 billion would be enough to make up for the losses in funding of domestic programs sustained since 2005 and allow up to about 4 percent beyond that to address additional unmet needs. The House budget provides just under \$418 billion for these programs; the Senate about \$413 billion. (The President's budget, at about \$395 billion, was at least \$10

billion less than the amount needed just to keep pace with inflation.)

Both the House and the Senate established a \$50 billion reserve fund to allow for extending SCHIP to all eligible children.

The House left more room for reauthorizing the Farm Bill and the Food Stamp program, allowing \$5 billion more than the Senate's resolution, and including language that signals that an expansion in the Food Stamp program is critical.

The Senate plan increases FY 2008 non-defense discretionary funding by \$8 billion, which amounts to an increase of 1.9% from this year's budget. Although the House plan calls for a \$14 billion (3.3%) increase above this baseline, neither of the proposals are enough to offset the effects of recent funding cuts and funding neglect in education, housing, child care, environmental protection, and other critical priorities.

The House and Senate plans both project that, by 2012, non-defense discretionary funding, when measured as a share of the economy, would fall to its lowest level in 50 years.

For more information and updates on the federal budget process, go to the Coalition on Human Needs website, www.chn.org.

Primary Care Case Management (PCCM) – How It Could Work for HUSKY

To assist state policymakers searching for alternatives for Connecticut's HUSKY program, the Connecticut Health Policy Project held a legislative briefing on Primary Care Case Management (PCCM) on March 27. Legislators and executive branch policymakers learned more about PCCM and how offering it as an option for HUSKY families could improve outcomes, save money and ensure accountability.

A PCCM system typically pays

primary care providers to coordinate a patient's care, ensuring that a patient receives timely well-child care, as well as care from specialists and other covered services. Advocates have been working on legislative proposals that would enable HUSKY patients to enroll in a PCCM pilot rather than in one of the current managed care health plans. Highlights of the forum, including speaker presentations, are at http://www.cthealthpolicy.org/pccm/2007_forum.htm.

State Budget Update

The Appropriations Committee passed its budget bill, which contains the spending side of the budget, on April 12. The Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee has announced the outline of its tax (revenue) proposal and is expected to adopt this proposal in the week of April 16. These proposals are significantly different from the Governor's proposals. The next step in the adoption of a two-year budget for the state is consideration of a budget proposal by the full House and Senate.

Highlights of the Appropriations Committee bill include:

Health Care

- Extends HUSKY A coverage for parents of children in HUSKY A to families with incomes up to 185% of the federal poverty level (up from 150% of federal poverty level for parents).
- Maintains SAGA coverage of non-emergency medical transportation. Governor Rell has recommended elimination of this service.
- Increases eligibility for the SAGA medical program to people with incomes at 70% of the federal poverty level (up from 60% of federal poverty level now).
- Provides for medical interpreting services under Medicaid.
- Expands Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women.
- Expands Medicaid eligibility for people who are elderly or disabled, or otherwise qualify by "spending down", to people at 100% of the federal poverty level (up from 60% of the federal poverty level)
- Provides \$20 million to increase dental rates to providers under Medicaid managed care.
- Increases Medicaid fee-for-service provider rates.
- Implements a Primary Care Case Management Project for families in Medicaid managed care.
- Adopts Governor Rell's proposals to increase enrollment in HUSKY, including enrolling all uninsured newborns at birth

Budget (cont. from p. 3)

and covering the costs of premiums. The Governor had proposed covering the costs for uninsured newborns for two months; the Committee bill increases this coverage to six months.

Welfare

■ Increases benefit payments for Temporary Family Assistance and State Administered General Assistance (SAGA) by \$4.1 million in the first year of the budget and by \$8.2 million in the second year.

■ Maintains the \$6.5 million in the Department of Labor budget for education, training and subsidized jobs for parents receiving TFA.

DSS Staffing

■ Provides funding for 39 additional DSS staff. The Governor proposed funding for 43 additional staff.

■ Highlights of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding tax proposals:

■ Adopts a state Earned Income Tax Credit.

■ Adopts progressive steps in the state income tax. The proposal maintains the exemption from tax on the first \$24,000 of income for a couple filing a joint return. Proposed rates on incomes above \$24,000 are: 3% on the first \$20,000 of taxable income; 4.75% on incomes from \$20,000 to \$100,000 (down from 5% now); 5% on incomes from \$100,000 to \$150,000; 5.5% on incomes from \$150,000 to \$200,000; 6.25% on incomes from \$200,000 and \$250,000 and 6.95% on incomes over \$250,000.

■ Increases the cigarette tax from \$1.51 to \$2.00 per pack.

■ Modifies the tax on estates over \$2 million to eliminate sudden jumps in tax liability ("cliffs").

(See Budge p.5)

CABHN Meetings

Upcoming Meeting

**CABHN/FESN Meeting
(tentative)**

Friday, June 8th

Wrap-up of Legislative Session

9:30-11:30 am

(CRT)

**555 Windsor St.
Hartford**

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.

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Legal Assistance Resource Center of CT
and
CABHN (Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs)
 80 Jefferson Street
 Hartford, CT 06106

CABHN FEVER

**E-Mail
Supplement**

Budget (cont. from p.4)

Housing

■ \$10 million for the capital needs of state public housing. (Advocates sought \$120M.)

■ \$5.5 million in '08 and '09 for 650 additional Rental Assistance Program certificates. Brings total to 2,500 certificates

■ Restore \$200,000 cut by the Governor and provides an additional \$100,000 for the Beyond Shelter program

■ Funds 500 new units of supportive housing in the biennium, instead of the 250 additional units proposed by the Governor. \$1.15million in '08 and \$4.9million in '09

■ \$350,000 in '08 and '09 for the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, to replace the loss of federal funds that threatened the Center's survival.

■ \$3.5 million per year in other additions to the Housing/Homelessness line item in the DSS budget, including \$1 million for counselors for homeless shelters, \$500,000 for child care services in shelters, and \$1.5 million for AIDS housing.

■ \$400,000 per year to expand the Elderly/Disabled RAP program in State Elderly/Disabled Housing (probably to permit base rent increases.)

■ \$700,000 in the second year of the budget to reestablish the Department of Housing

■ \$4 million from the budget surplus for HOME Connecticut

■ Defund state payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) to towns for the State Moderate Rental Housing (\$2,204,000) and tax abatement payments for non-profit housing (\$1,704,890).

■ \$1.4 million in DCF budget for case management services for Supportive Housing for Recovering Families.

3rd Annual Youth And Democracy Forum:

Date: Saturday, April 24, 2007

Location: State Capitol (North Lobby),
1pm to 3pm

Attend this public forum for high school students, parents, educators and community activists across Connecticut interested in learning more about opportunities to engage young people in our community.

There will be giveaways, food, Civic Mall and State Capitol Tour.

Speak with representatives of youth based agencies and collect information at the "Civic Mall" informational tables. Participants in the Civic Mall include:

ASPIRA of CT
CT Valley Girl Scout Council
CT Voices for Children,
and others.

Featured guests include: Lesley D. Mara, Deputy Secretary of the State, Carlos Saavedra, community leader in East Boston, MA & coordinator of the Student Immigrant Movement, and Spank B.U.D.A., host of a top-ranked show on Power 104.1.

Obtain a copy of Youth in Action! Civic Engagement Toolkit by going to www.DemocracyWorksCT.org. For more information, call Democracy Works at **(860) 727-1157 or (866) 9Voting (Toll Free)** or **Email: Bozeman@democracyworksct.org**

Stand Up For Health Care Rally!

Sponsored by the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut

When: Saturday, May 5th, 11 am - 1 pm

Where: Bushnell Park, Hartford

Show up! Be counted! It matters!

For more information, call 203-639-0550 or download a flyer from www.healthcare4every1.org.

Join the Walk for Autism

Sponsored by Autism Spectrum Resource Center, Inc. (ASRC)

Sunday, May 6, 2007 at Brooksvale Park in Hamden, CT

For more information, go to

<http://www.ct-asrc.org/fund/spnwlk.html> or call (203)248-5222 or (203) 265.3949.

Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness Hosts 2007 Annual Meeting

Tuesday, May 1, 2007 10AM - 2PM

Water's Edge Resort & Spa

1525 Boston Post Road, Westbrook, CT

Registration is \$40 per person

Please register no later than April 24th.

Guest Speaker: Dennis Culhane, PhD

Professor at the University of PA

Mail registration/check to:

CCEH, 30 Jordan Lane

Wethersfield, CT 06109