

Highlights in this issue:	
<i>Husky Termination</i>	<i>p 1</i>
<i>End Hunger CT Report</i>	<i>p 1</i>
<i>Employee Rights Info</i>	<i>p 2</i>
<i>Free Glaucoma Screening</i>	<i>p 2</i>
<i>State Budget Update</i>	<i>p 3</i>

CABHN FEVER

Adults & Children Losing HUSKY Health Insurance Can Challenge Termination

In the deficit reduction package adopted at the end of February, coverage for parents of children in the HUSKY health insurance program in families with income over 100% of the federal poverty level (\$15,260 for a family of three) was eliminated. This change will affect about 23,000 adults. Another change, the elimination of ‘continuous eligibility’ for children, will result in the end of coverage for about 7,000 children. Both these changes are scheduled to take effect on April 1.



The Department of Social Services (DSS) has been notifying affected parents and children through written notices.

There are, however, serious questions as to whether the cuts can be implemented in this way under federal law. The federal Medicaid program provides for extended medical assistance for at least one year for many parents who become ineligible for Medicaid.

In addition, many children and parents facing elimination of their coverage as a result of the changes adopted in February may be eligible for coverage under other provisions of Medicaid law. Unless DSS conducts a review of each case, eligible Medicaid recipients may lose coverage unnecessarily.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED THAT YOU ARE LOSING MEDICAID COVERAGE, CONTACT STATEWIDE LEGAL SERVICES to discuss whether you are eligible for continued coverage. SLS phone numbers: 1-800-453-3320 or 860-344-0380 if calling from the Middletown area. Hours are Mon-Fri - 9am to 3pm & Thurs 5:30-7:30 (ext. hours on this day only).

What else can you do if you lose coverage?

SHOUT, Student Health Outreach, now has a toll-free line for HUSKY consumers who are concerned that they may be losing coverage. SHOUT is an independent, student-run organization based in New Haven that helps consumers apply for public programs and access care once enrolled, and helps the uninsured find resources for care. Consumers with questions can call 1-877-24-SHOUT (1-877-247-4688) to connect with a worker who will help in identifying resources, accessing care, filing an appeal, applying for free bed funds linking with legal resources and advocacy. ♦

Making Room at the Table: Ending Hunger in Connecticut



Do you want to find out if eligible children in your town are actually receiving a school breakfast? Do you know the food stamp participation rate for your town? Find out in End Hunger

Connecticut!’s latest report, “Making Room at the Table: Ending Hunger in Connecticut”.

This report describes the complex nature of hunger in our state, discusses the consequences of hunger that affect us all and highlights programs that have proven to reduce hunger. Plus, find out how your town does in fighting hunger

New Toll Free Help Line for Hispanics

U.S. Health & Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson announced the creation of a Spanish and English language health helpline for Hispanics called “Su Familia.” The toll free helpline, 866-SU-FAMILIA, was developed and is operated by the National Alliance for Hispanic Health. It is designed to give Hispanic families basic health information to help prevent and manage chronic conditions and to refer them to local health providers and federally supported programs, including CHIP. Callers can request health information, referrals to information sources, or bilingual fact sheets on health topics such as asthma, cancer screening, cardiovascular disease, immunizations, diabetes, domestic violence and HIV/AIDS. ♦

Health Care Day at the Capitol!

Sponsored by: The Caring Families Coalition **WHEN:9-12 a.m. TUESDAY, APRIL 15th.** The day starts at 8:30 with registration in Room 2-C of the LOB, Capitol Ave., Hartford. At 9:00 a.m. there will be a press conference and then meetings with legislators from 9-12 a.m. If you would like to come as a group, please call Gina at 860-297-5197 and she will help to arrange meetings with your area legislators. ♦

through the town by town indices of hunger. Please use the report to show your local or state policymakers both the need and the solutions to ending hunger and creating a healthier environment in your community!

Call EHC! at (860) 296-1127 for a free copy. There is a small charge for additional copies and postage. Let’s make room at the table. ♦

Employee Rights Info FAQ's: Pregnancy & Your Job



Q: I'm pregnant and working. Do I have legal rights to protect me?

A: Yes. It is illegal for an employer to fire, harass or discriminate against you because of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) requires that employers treat pregnancy like any other disability. For example, if your employer has disability benefits for employees who are physically unable to work, the employer must give you the same benefits if you cannot work because of your pregnancy. The PDA and another set of laws, the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), protect eligible employees who need to take unpaid leave after giving birth.

Q: What do I do if I get fired because I am pregnant or am denied any other rights because of my pregnancy or childbirth?

A: You can file a claim of pregnancy discrimination with the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (860) 566-7710. And, if you are an eligible employee under the FMLA, you can file a claim with the Connecticut Department of Labor (860) 263-6790. (See the legal aid flyer: *Q & A: Taking Time Off From Work*).

Q: Can my employer decide when I have to stop working?

A: Generally, no. An employer cannot decide when pregnant employees must stop working. If you are physically able to work, you can keep working until the baby is born and go back to work as soon as you are physically able to do your job. But if your pregnancy actually interferes with your ability to do your job, the employer may decide that you should no longer work at that job during your pregnancy. In that case, the employer should transfer you to a suitable temporary position if one is available.

Q: Can I keep my benefits while I am on leave?

A: Yes, the law requires that employers give the same sick leave, disability leave, and leaves of absences to pregnant workers as to other workers. The law also requires that during the period of your leave, you will continue to receive health benefits and other fringe benefits on the same terms as when you are working.

Q: Can I collect unemployment benefits while I am out on leave?

A: Probably not. If you are on leave from your job after childbirth, it is assumed that you are not ready and able to work. You must be both physically able and available to work and not have a job to collect unemployment compensation.

Questions?? Call Statewide Legal Services for free advice and information at 1-800-453-3320 or (860) 344-0380. ♦

Save the Date!

Budget ConneCTion\$: A Look At Corporate Taxation in Connecticut

Join Us In Learning About the Best Ways To Make Corporate Taxes Part Of The Solution To Maintaining Our State Investments in Education, Health & Public Safety

This event will take place on April 16, 2003 in the Old Judiciary Room at the

State Capitol in Hartford, from 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM.

Featured Speakers will include:

Richard Pomp, Professor, UConn Law School, Mary Forsberg, Senior Policy Analyst, New Jersey Policy Perspectives, Michael Mazerov, Senior Policy Analyst, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities,


(continued, see SAVE DATE, p. 4)

Free Glaucoma Screening

On Friday, April 25, UConn Health Center ophthalmologists Jeanine Suchecki, M.D. and William Ehlers, M.D., will offer glaucoma screenings from 2 to 5 p.m. in the Charlotte Johnson Hollfelder Center for Women's Health, conveniently located off the main hospital lobby.

For all programs and screenings, registration is recommended. Please call *Celebrate Women* at 866-4-FEMALE or 860-679-8899. ♦

Kids & Summer Camp

 Time to start thinking about summer camp! Hartford residents, if your child is between the ages of 5 and 12, Camp Courant is for you. Transportation is provided and day camp is free! Pre-registration is required and forms will be available in early April. For more information, call (860) 241-3795 or email ckistner@campcourant.org. Camp Courant also provides summer employment opportunities as well as an abundance of volunteer opportunities. Check it out at www.campcourant.org.

For a complete listing of overnight camps in Connecticut, go to: <http://www.acane-camps.org/ctres.htm>
For a complete listing of day camps in Connecticut, go to: <http://www.acane-camps.org/ctday.htm> ♦

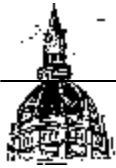
**Working Together...
we can find a better way!**

We hope CABHN Fever has helped you stay informed. Join CABHN today for \$30* and receive a copy of **Mapping Change**, the latest summary of changes affecting low-income people.

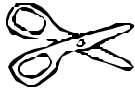
Yes, let's work together!
Send your donation today!

Make check payable to CABHN and send to 80 Jefferson St., Hartford, CT 06106

*plus \$3 shipping/handling
Donations are not tax-deductable.



State Budget Update



On March 5, the Governor announced a proposed budget for the two-year period from July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2005. Once again, the proposal included significant cuts to social services, along with small increases to revenues.

Many cuts in medical services were proposed, including:

■ **Eliminate Saga (State Administered General Assistance) Medical and Cash Programs.** About 25,000 are enrolled in the SAGA medical program; about 4,500 people receive cash assistance through SAGA.

■ **Close HUSKY B and HUSKY Plus to New Applicants.** About 1,000 children enroll in HUSKY B each month.

■ **Increase Premiums in HUSKY B.** Families in HUSKY B with incomes between 185 and 235% of the federal poverty level currently do not pay premiums. Under the Governor's proposal, these families would pay a monthly premium of \$30 per child with a family maximum of \$50. Families with incomes between 236 and 300% of the federal poverty level would pay \$50 per child with a family maximum of \$75.

■ **Restructure HUSKY A Benefits.** The Governor proposes to redesign both HUSKY A and fee-for-service Medicaid benefits "to more closely resemble commercial insurance plan coverage." This would mean changes in the benefit package and increased cost-sharing through premiums and co-payments. The Governor's proposal could only be carried out under changes in federal law or through a federal Medicaid waiver.

■ **Eliminate or Change a Variety of Procedures** which make it easier for people to get and maintain health coverage, including Presumptive Eligibility, Self-

declaration of Income, Transitional Medical Assistance.

■ **Close the State-funded Medical Program for Recent Legal Immigrants to New Applicants.**

■ **Eliminate Medicaid Coverage of Dental Care for Adults.**

Housing programs are also cut in the Governor's proposed budget. Proposals include:

■ **Seize \$80 Million (\$40 Million per Year) in CHFA Reserves.** This is in addition to the \$85 million in Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) reserves which were taken last year. Some of these reserves were supposed to be used by CHFA to help fund the rehabilitation of state family public housing, which is being transferred from DECD to CHFA. The loss of the reserves will make it impossible for CHFA to do this.

■ **End Housing Tax Credit Programs Worth \$8 Million in Tax Credits.** This includes both the CHFA's Housing Tax Credit Contribution Program (\$5 million) and the Historic Home Ownership Tax Credit Program (\$3 million). These highly successful tax credit programs are used to leverage millions of dollars more in private investment in low and moderate income housing.

The Governor proposed the following social service cuts:

■ **Eliminate the Safety Net Program.** The Safety Net Program provides vouchered services and concentrated case management to people who are cut from the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) cash assistance program because of sanctions.

■ **Close TFA to New Applicants Who Are Recent Legal Immigrants.**

■ **Eliminate the State-funded Food Stamp Program for Recent Legal Immigrants.**

Because of falling tax revenues, achieving a balanced budget will require either massive social service cuts such as those proposed above or increases in taxes on wealthy individuals and corporations.

The Appropriations Committee has completed its public hearings on these proposals. Although there may be some additional hearings in other committees (see below for details of Human Services Committee Hearing), many of these proposals are included in the omnibus budget bill that the Governor submitted to the Appropriations Committee and are not before individual Committees. Now is a good time to contact your legislators and legislative leaders (Rep. Moira Lyons and Jim Amann and Sen. Kevin Sullivan and Martin Looney) about proposed cuts that will hurt in your community. ♦

Call Your Legislator 

House Democrats	1-800-842-8267
House Republicans	1-800-842-8270
Senate Democrats	1-800-842-1420
Senate Republicans	1-800-842-1421
Governor's Office	1-800-406-1527

Human Services Committee: Thursday, April 10, 2003



The Human Services Committee will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, April 10, 2003** at 10: 30 A. M. in **Room 2A** of the LOB. Sign up will begin at 9: 00 A. M. outside Room 2A. Please submit 50 copies of written testimony to the Human Services Committee, Room 2000, one hour prior to the start of the hearing. Testimony received after that time may not be distributed that day. The first hour of the hearing is reserved for testimony from legislators and state agency heads. Speakers will be limited to three minutes of testimony.

Subject Matter: Governor's Proposed Budget with respect to Human Services Appropriations. ♦

A Special Honor

Sara Parker-McKernan of LARCC (Legal Assistance Resource Center of CT, Inc.) was awarded the 2003 Sister Virginia McCrossan Vision Award by In-The-Making of Waterbury, CT at its Fifth Anniversary Celebration on Tuesday, March 25th. This award is presented to a woman who exemplifies the values of Sister Virginia...freedom, expansion, exploration, empowerment and creativity. Recipients share both their giftedness and the gift of \$1,000 in financial assistance with persons who are echoing by their lives the dreams and values held dear by all supporters of In-The-Making. **Congratulations, Sara! ♦**

Save the Date

(con't from p. 2)

The Session's objective is to explore options that can increase state revenues and make corporate taxes fairer for small businesses, while still keeping Connecticut competitive. ♦♦

Free Performances for the Family

Looking for a day of family fun? Come to Hartford on April 27, 2003 for the String Break Open House at the Bushnell.

More than 30 FREE performances and events for the whole family! Along with two performances by Deborah Henson-Conant (jazz, blues) at 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the Belding Theater, other events include: hands-on activities for children, concerts, dance performances, symphonic presentations and chamber music. Free parking available from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Location of event is the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, 166 Capitol Avenue in Hartford. ♦

Sponsored by:

Connecticut Voices for Children

R.S.V.P. by fax or email to CT Voices for Children

Fax to Ally Brundige 203.498.4242 or email to ally@ctkidslink.org ♦

CABHN Meetings held 2nd Friday of the month

10 - Noon

Friday April 11th

Community Renewal Team
555 Windsor St., Hartford

Topics:

- ✓ *The Changing Face of CABHN - Your Input is Important - please be there!*
- ✓ And more

May meeting:

Friday, May 9th at CRT

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.

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

NONPROFIT ORG
U S POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD CT
PERMIT NO 3377