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# CABHN FEVER

## Help for Seniors to Locate Benefits

The National Council on the Aging (NCA) has recently partnered with America On Line(AOL), the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), and several public and private organizations to help seniors locate benefits they may be eligible for.

BenefitsCheckUp is capable of screening over 1,000 programs to determine eligibility for federal, state, and local benefits as well as screening for private company benefits.

The North Central Area Agency on Aging, Inc. (NCAAA) recently became a beta testing site for the Benefits CheckUp Organizational edition. If you would like to participate:

- ✓obtain the printed questionnaire from NCAAA,
- ✓return it to NCAAA for processing
- ✓receive a printed description of all benefits to which you may be entitled along with info on how to apply for them.

For questionnaire and info, contact Sharon Garrard, CHOICES/Medi\$ave Regional Coordinator, NCAAA (860) 724-6443 X 269, Fax:(860) 251-6107, e-mail: smgarrard@yahoo.com♦

## Free Special Education Course

*Understanding Special Education (USE)* is a 12-hour course designed to equip parents and professionals with the skills they need to negotiate the special education system and improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Training sessions are being held in multiple locations throughout the State during 2002. Stipends are available to parents to cover transportation, and

Continued, see FREE, p.4

## More Funds for Nutrition Programs and Local Farmers



The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) will be getting additional funding in the 2002 season. Both federal nutrition programs promote healthy diets and locally grown food. With the passage of the 2002 Farm Bill, the USDA is providing \$15 million in extra funding for the FMNP and \$5 million for the SFMNP. These additional funds bring the total federal appropriation to \$40 million for the programs.

Certified WIC recipients, low income seniors and other low income individuals are eligible to participate. Coupons are distributed through senior centers and other community agencies when the farmers' markets are in operation

For more information about the program and one of the state's 55 locations, call Theresa Pereira or Tracy Helin at the Connecticut Association for Human Services at (860) 951-2212, ext. 236 or 237. For additional information, you may contact your local WIC office or the Connecticut Department of Agriculture at (860) 713-2503.♦

## Website Offering Cultural Competence Info for Providers

The *Provider's Guide to Quality & Culture* offers a gentle, user-friendly format to educate providers (and all of us) about cultural competence in providing care. Topics include common health



Continued, see WEBSITE, p.4

## A Community Food Security Toolkit From USDA

"The National Nutrition Safety Net: Tools for Community Food Security" (FNS-314), is a guide designed to help communities assess and improve their use of Federal nutrition assistance programs to achieve community food security.

This tool kit contains a set of practical checklists to assess how well a community uses USDA's nutrition assistance programs. These checklists will help pinpoint potential barriers to participation that may cause eligible people to miss out on benefits. The checklists highlight a variety of ways to strengthen program operations in a community. To check out this guide, go to: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsec/toolkit/SafetyNet.htm>♦



## CT Receives Over \$1.6m Emergency Energy Assistance

Connecticut will be receiving more than \$1.6 million to help low-income households with their energy needs. The funds are part of \$100 million released yesterday by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

The Connecticut Department of Social Services will distribute the resources to low-income households to help them cover increased home energy bills due to high temperatures experienced over the past six weeks..

The Emergency Energy Assistance Funds will be distributed through the same agencies that administer the Fuel Assistance Program during the inter.

For more information, you can contact Deborah Noble at CABHN, 860-278-5688 x. 12. ♦



In June, the Senate Finance Committee came out with their version of TANF Re-Authorization titled the "Work, Opportunity, and Responsibility For Kids Act of 2002", also know as the WORK Act of 2002. The next step in the process will be for Sen. Thomas Daschle to bring this bill and various amendments to the floor of the Senate in September. Senator Daschle has indicated that he will devote some portion of a week in September to full Senate consideration of the Senate Finance Committee bill. However, the possibility still remains that TANF will not be re-authorized by the September 30th deadline, in which case, the existing TANF Act would be extended for another year.

It is imperative that this bill be brought up early enough in the September Congressional session for it to be fully debated before going to the Conference Committee. Throughout August, groups from across the country have been contacting not only their local senators, but also Sen. Daschle, encouraging him to bring the bill to the floor. The Senate Finance WORK Act of 2002 improves upon the House version of TANF Re-authorization by:

- ✓Exempting persons who care for a disabled relative from work requirements
- ✓Increasing access to education and training, including post-secondary education
- ✓Creating the "At-Home Infant Care" Pilot Program
- ✓Reforming the child support rules so that more child support payments go to children
- ✓Requiring states to screen and assess a client's barriers to employment
- ✓Giving states the option to provide TANF-funded benefits to recent immigrants

The bill passed by the Senate Finance Committee also improves the House bill by:

- ✓maintaining the work requirements at 30 hours per week and 20 hours for a parent with a child under 6 years of age
- ✓rejecting the Administration Superwaiver proposal, which would give the Federal Dept. of Health and Human Services the power to waive Congressional mandates in programs designed to meet the needs of low-income people at the request of state government.

### What can you do?

Continue to fax, e-mail, or call Senators Dodd and Lieberman and tell them what we have been experiencing here in Connecticut and why the changes listed above need to be a part of TANF Re-Authorization. Let Sen. Dodd and Sen. Lieberman know how important it is that the Senate Finance Committee Bill be passed this year.

*Sen. Joseph Lieberman in Washington  
Tel. 202-224-4041 FAX: 202-224-9750,  
in Hartford Tel. 860-549-8463*

*Fax: 860-549-8478*

*Sen. Christopher Dodd in Washington  
Tel. 202-224-2823 FAX: 202-228-1683,  
in Hartford Tel. 860-258-6940*

*Fax: 860-258-6958*

For further updates on TANF Re-authorization you can contact Deborah Noble at CABHN , 860-278-5688 x. 12

### New TANF Analysis

A new TANF analysis is available on the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities web site:

"ONESTEPFORWARDORTWOSTEPS BACK? Why the Bipartisan Senate Finance Bill Reflects a Better Approach to TANF Reauthorization than the House Bill"

[www.cbpp.org/8-9-02tanf.htm](http://www.cbpp.org/8-9-02tanf.htm)(overview only)


[www.cbpp.org/8-9-02tanf.pdf](http://www.cbpp.org/8-9-02tanf.pdf) (full report)

## Another Senator Chimes in on TANF Re-Authorization

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2002 , Sen. Patty Murray, D-WA, introduced new TANF legislation titled "The Secure and Healthy Families Act". Senator Murray's bill would create a Secure and Healthy Families fund to support such state and local efforts as providing family counseling, income enhancement and teen pregnancy prevention programs, rather than using welfare dollars for marriage promotion. This bill would also make some welfare rules more flexible, help teen parents, increase funds for counseling, and support caregivers for disabled children.

This bill addresses the needs of teen parents by not starting the 5 year time clock until the teen parent reaches 20 years of age and by counting the teen's education as work until completion. It also recognizes the value of caregiving by giving states the option to count caregiving for a child up to 3 yrs. old as work and stops the clock if the recipient is caring for a sick or disabled family member. Perhaps the best aspect of the "Secure and Healthy Families Act" is the elimination of full family sanctions when only one family member is non-compliant.

For a summary of the bill, please contact Deborah Noble, CABHN at 860-278-5688 x 12 or NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund Policy Attorney, Jacqueline Payne at (202) 326-0044 or [jpayne@nowldef.org](mailto:jpayne@nowldef.org).



Do you have concerns about your child's ability to see, talk, hear, move, eat, play? To talk to someone about your concerns, call the Birth to Three INFOLINE. TDD accessible.  
1-800-505-7000  
860-571-7556 (outside Connecticut)



## General Assembly Completes Its Work On Budget

In the early morning hours of August 13<sup>th</sup>, the General Assembly completed its adjustments to the 2002-2003 state budget. The adjustments were needed due to rapidly declining state revenues, which have thrown the two-year budget adopted in 2001 far out of balance.

All things considered, these final adjustments represent modest improvements over the version of the budget which was adopted by the General Assembly during the Special Session at the end of June. The biggest undesirable change was a reduction in medical services in the Medicaid, SAGA and GA programs.

Here are some of the important changes:

### Legal immigrants

State-funded cash, food stamp and medical assistance for legal immigrants were maintained for an additional year.

### Alternate base period

The act creates for the next three years an alternate base period for calculating eligibility for unemployment compensation benefits so as to provide unemployment compensation eligibility for some workers who would otherwise not have enough earnings to qualify. This alternate base period is the four most recently completed calendar quarters.

### State Supplement

The act provides that the State Supplement personal needs allowance will be increased by one-half of the January 2003 percentage increase in SSI benefits.

### Medicaid

DSS is prohibited from eliminating Medicaid coverage for non-emergency medical transportation (except for use of a personal vehicle), but DSS is required to amend the state's Medicaid plan to reduce other optional services so as to implement the \$11 million budget cut which was adopted in June. It is expected that this cut will include podiatry,

### TANF Bonus funds

Connecticut received about \$13.3 million in Welfare-to-Work TANF Performance Bonus Funds. The General Assembly allocated that money in the final budget bill as follows (to be used over a two-year period):

\$4,000,000	<i>Reopening of the child care certificate program</i>
\$2,000,000	<i>Rental assistance vouchers and T-RAP</i>
\$2,000,000	<i>Welfare-to-Work reverse commuting</i>
\$1,900,000	<i>Enhanced assessment and case management for TFA applicants</i>
\$1,800,000	<i>Enhanced provision of grant funds to address TANF clients with barriers</i>
\$ 600,000	<i>Fatherhood research and demonstration projects</i>
\$ 539,405	<i>Connecticut Charts-a-Course program</i>
\$ 500,000	<i>Jobs Funnel program</i>

The \$1,800,000 to address TANF clients with barriers will be administered by the Department of Labor. All other funds will go through DSS. Community action agencies are to receive \$400,000 of the money allocated for enhanced assessment and case management. One-quarter of the rental assistance funds (\$500,000) are to be reserved for individuals no longer eligible for TFA because they have reached their TFA time limits.

chiropractic, and naturopathic services. It is not clear if it will include any other cuts.

### HUSKY

The act leaves intact the current income limit of 150% of poverty with no co-pays.

### Prior authorization

The act requires prior authorization for the initial prescription of a brand-name drug if there is a generic equivalent (with an exception for atypical anti-psychotic drugs). It also overrides a portion of previous law, which had deemed a pharmacist's prior authorization request to be approved if DSS fails to respond within two hours. In addition, the act eliminates the dispensing fee for pharmacists, who were formerly paid 50 cents per prescription for substituting a generic drug for a name brand.

### General Assistance

The act eliminates SAGA and GA medical coverage for eye care and glasses, podiatry, chiropractic, naturopathy, and home health care.

### ConnPACE

The ConnPACE co-pay will increase, effective September 1, to \$15 for new applicants with incomes between \$15,900

to \$20,000 (\$21,500 to \$27,100 for couples). It will remain \$12 for participants below \$15,900 (\$21,500 for couples). Anyone already on ConnPACE before the \$3 increase takes effect, however, will be grandfathered into the \$12 co-pay and will not have to pay the increase to \$15. The new law requires DSS to adjust these income levels annually for inflation.

### Long-term care website

The act requires OPM to set up an internet website to provide comprehensive information on long-term care options, including referrals to organizations offering advice, counseling, and legal services.

**It is important to remember** that, while several improvements were just made, there is a wide expectation that the continued growth of the deficit will result in a new round of budget-cutting after the November election. The Governor has already been given legislative authority to reduce agency allotments by \$35 million at his discretion; and he can generate further savings simply by directing agencies not to spend parts of their appropriations. In addition, the legislature may well be called back for a post-election special session in November to make further cuts.

**Website** (Cont'd from p. 1)

problems, how to work with an interpreter, medical history and diagnostics, patient adherence assumptions and prejudices, and common beliefs and health practices. The site includes a fascinating quiz (they do not keep the results). To learn more, go to the main page at <http://erc.msh.org> - from there click on *Provider's Guide to Quality & Culture*. ❖

**FREE** (cont'd from p.1)

childcare costs. For information on a training session near you, please call AnneMarieDavidson (860) 679-1568 email at [adavidson@up.uchc.edu](mailto:adavidson@up.uchc.edu), or visit the project web page at <http://www.uconned.org/use/usehome.htm>. ❖

**SAVE THE DATE! CABHN MEETING**

**Friday, 10/11/02** 10 am to noon, Lifeworks Center  
85 Willow St, Bldg. 52 New Haven (Exit 6 off of 91 South)

**Guest Speaker:** Patricia Wallace from The Office of Urban Affairs of the Archdiocese of Hartford and the CenterEdge Project. The CenterEdge Project is building a broad coalition to educate as many people as possible about disparities created by our long-term pattern of development in each metropolitan area of Connecticut. It will

give people who live in very different settings the chance to discover surprising facts about shared problems and common self-interests. There will be a visual presentation which includes a series of colorful maps to illustrate what is happening in the state on a broad range of issues. It will be a fascinating and eye-opening presentation. ❖

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

**CABHN Meetings**  
*held 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month*
**10 - Noon**
**Friday September 13<sup>th</sup>**

Community Renewal Team  
555 Windsor St., Hartford

*Topics:*

Legislative & Budget Update  
TANF Reauthorization  
& More

**7** October 11th  
see details

*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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