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CABHN FEVER

Income, Poverty and Health Coverage Data Released by Census Bureau

On August 28, the Census Bureau released figures on income, poverty rates and health insurance coverage rates for 2006. The information comes from two Census Bureau surveys - the Current Population Survey and the American Community Survey.

The Coalition on Human Needs summarized the national data as follows:

In the recession year of 2001, 11.5 percent of all Americans were poor. Now (in 2006), 12.3 percent are poor, according to the Current Population Survey. Median income rose slightly, but it is still lower than it was in 1999, and for the past three years, both men and women's earnings have been declining. The number of people without health insurance has risen by 2.2 million in just one year, to nearly 47 million (rising from 15.3 percent to 15.8 percent). Children also lost ground - the proportion without coverage grew from 10.9 percent in 2005 to 11.7 percent in 2006.

It is true that poverty declined from 12.6 percent in 2005 to 12.3 percent in 2006, and that median income has gone up slightly. But this is just not good enough. As noted by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2006 is the first time on record that, five years after a recession, poverty remains higher than it was during the recession. There was economic growth in 2006 - but not very much of it was shared with people with median income or less.

For Connecticut, the numbers are somewhat better than the national statistics but show no significant changes from 2005. The Current Population Survey shows that, in 2006, 8% of Connecticut residents (275,000) had incomes under the

Federal Poverty Level (\$20,615 for a family of four in 2006) and 9.4% (325,000) were without health insurance for the entire year. The American Community Survey shows that 10.7% of Connecticut children living with a relative (as opposed to living in foster care or a group home, for instance) were in poverty. In 2004, when Connecticut adopted the goal of cutting child poverty in half in ten years, the state's child poverty rate was 10.1%.

For more detailed information and analysis, go to:

National: Coalition on Human Needs, www.chn.org or Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, www.cbpp.org

State: Connecticut Voices for Children, www.ctkidslink.org ♦

Childcare Expenses Getting You Down? Check out CARE 4 KIDS!



How would you like to save money on your daycare expenses? Care 4 Kids helps many families in Connecticut pay for child care costs. This program is a partnership of the State of Connecticut's Department of Social Services and childcare providers.

If you live in Connecticut and work, attend a Jobs First training activity, and meet the Care 4 Kids income guidelines, you might be able to save part of your childcare expenses. In order to qualify, your children must:

- ✓ be under 13 (or 19, if they have special needs),
- ✓ attend a state-licensed daycare, or

- ✓ stay with a family member (like a grandparent).

How much can you make and still qualify? A family of two must earn less than \$2,613 a month; a family of three-\$3,227 a month; a family of four-\$3,842; a family of five-\$4,456. Larger households can earn higher amounts. If your family is already on Care 4 Kids, you may be able to earn higher amounts.

For info and to apply, call 1-888-214-KIDS (5437). Applications are also available on the website www.ctcare4kids.com. ♦

Public Hearings On Special Education

The State Department of Education is holding public hearings on proposed changes to the state special education regulations. Public hearings will be held on the following days:

Sept. 17th: 10 am to 3 pm at EASTConn, 376 Hartford Turnpike, Hampton

Sept. 24th: 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm at CREC, 111 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford, CT

Oct. 15th, 10 am to 3 pm at EdConnection, 355 Goshen Road, Litchfield, CT

Oct. 22nd, 10 am to 3 pm at LEARN, 44 Hatchetts Hill Road, Old Lyme, CT

Written comments may be submitted to Therese D. Francis, Esq., State Department of Education, P.O. Box 2219, Hartford, CT 06145.

The proposed changes may be obtained at www.sde.ct.gov/sde, click on "Special education," then select "Bureau Blog," then click on "May."

For questions about the impact of the changes, call Greater Hartford Legal Aid at 541-5000. ♦

2007 State of Working Connecticut Report Released

Connecticut Voices for Children has released the 2007 version of its annual State of Working Connecticut Report. The full report is available on the Connecticut Voices for Children website: www.ctkidslink.org.

Notably, the report found that Connecticut wage earners at every level earned less in 2006 than they did in 2002 (when wages are adjusted for inflation). The state's low wage workers had the biggest real wage decrease in the nation.

Other important findings:

- **Connecticut has recovered nearly all of the jobs lost during the last recession, but lags in employment growth compared to the nation.** Connecticut's employment growth rate is 3.7% since 2003; the national rate is 6.4%.
- **Connecticut's economy continues to grow, as measured by its size, profits, and productivity, but wages at all levels have lagged or deteriorated.**
- **16.8% of Connecticut's workers receive a "poverty" wage (or less).** "Poverty wage" (\$9.91 per hour) is the wage at which full-time, full-year work leaves family income at the federal poverty level.
- **Connecticut men continue to make more than Connecticut women.** In 2006, at the median, men earned \$20.04 to women's \$15.20.
- **Education is an increasingly strong predictor of income in Connecticut.** Graduates with a bachelors degree or higher now enjoy median wages of \$26.39 per hour, more than double the \$9.79 paid to workers lacking a high school education . ❖

School Starts with Some Big Changes in Hartford

Hartford Schools opened on August 29, 2007. With this new academic year, come changes as Hartford enters into "phase one" of Superintendent Adamowski's reform strategy. The changes will have significant impact on some of Hartford's special education students.

The Hartford Transitional Learning Academy (HTLA) Annex on Tower Avenue is undergoing changes. New literacy and behavior modification programs will be introduced this academic year. Class sizes will remain small. Non-special education students will begin to attend the school. HTLA on Washington Street, up until now a school for special education students 7th-12th grade, will become the new home of the Hartford Adult Center by consolidating the 2 existing branches into one more central location.

With HTLA (Washington Street) closing entirely, the students who were in attendance there will have new placements. Some will return to their local high school. Some will move to "out of district" placements. With HTLA Annex restructuring, some students will remain and have to adjust to curriculum changes. Others will transition back to their local school. For all special education students affected, the changes should be monitored on an individual basis to ensure that a student's IEP goals and objectives are being met in his/her placement and that the student is receiving the supports and services set forth in his/her IEP.

If you are a service provider in the greater Hartford area and have any questions about special education, would like an in-house special education training for your staff, or if you have concerns about how the changes described above are affecting a specific student, please call attorney Maria Morelli-Wolfe or attorney Lynn Cochrane at Greater Hartford Legal

Aid at 541-5000. If you need special education assistance from outside the Hartford area, please call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 for help.❖

DCF Subsidized Guardianship Program Expanded

Are you the guardian of a related child (such as your grandchild, your niece, or your nephew) for whom you are receiving payments from DCF through the DCF Subsidized Guardianship program? Are you also the guardian of one or more of that child's siblings for whom you are not receiving DCF payments? If so, you should know about a new state law, effective on October 1, that allows you to receive DCF payments for the half- or step-brother or sister of a child who is living with you as part of the DCF Subsidized Guardianship program. Subsidized guardianship payments which range from \$678 to \$834 per month for each child, are significantly higher than what you would receive for the same child on TFA. Contact the local office of the Department of Children and Families for more details. DCF has offices in Bridgeport, Danbury, New Haven, Hartford, Manchester, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, Norwalk, Norwich, Stamford, Torrington, Waterbury and Willimantic.❖

Save the Date!

Mark your calendar for the state's largest gathering of affordable housing practitioners and advocates. "**Housing 2007: Building Blocks of Progress – The 2007 Annual Conference of the Connecticut Housing Coalition**" will be Monday, October 22 at the Mystic Marriott Hotel in Mystic, CT. The featured speaker will be Congressman Barney Frank, Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee. Detailed brochures will be mailed in September. If you are not already on the Coalition's mailing list, e-mail info@ct-housing.org or call (860) 563-2943 x10.



**SCHIP
Reauthorization**

In 1997, Congress established the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), funded by a \$40 billion federal block grant for 10 years. Through the SCHIP block grant, states can receive 65% of the costs of providing health care to SCHIP-eligible children from the federal government.

In Connecticut, this funding led to the development of the HUSKY program. HUSKY is a combination of Medicaid for low-income children and families with incomes below 185% of the federal poverty level (HUSKY A) and HUSKY B for children (no adults) from families with higher income. HUSKY B provides free health care coverage for children in families with incomes from 185% to 235% of the federal poverty level, reduced cost coverage for children in families with incomes from 235% to 300% of the federal poverty level and is open to children from families with higher incomes if the family pays the full cost of participating. Connecticut is reimbursed for 65% of the cost of HUSKY B by the federal government through the SCHIP block grant.

Congress is now working to reauthorize the SCHIP program by September 30, 2007. (If SCHIP is not reauthorized by that date, it is expected that the current law will be extended through a continuing budget resolution.)

The Senate and the House of Representatives each passed different versions of SCHIP reauthorization before leaving for their summer break. President Bush opposes both these versions. And, on August 17, the federal agency which administers SCHIP, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued new rules for SCHIP which will make covering children from families with incomes over 250% of the federal poverty level virtually impossible.

See SCHIP pg. 4

House and Senate SCHIP Reauthorization - Key Provisions

House of Representatives	Senate
<p>Funding \$47 billion</p> <p>Children Covered 5 million otherwise uninsured</p> <p>Income Limits No changes in income limits</p>	<p>\$35 billion</p> <p>4 million otherwise uninsured</p> <p>Limits federal matching funds at the SCHIP level (65%) to children from families with incomes below 300% of the federal poverty level, except for states which have already adopted coverage above 300%. Otherwise, match is limited to the Medicaid match rate (in CT, 50%).</p>
<p>Pregnant Women Allows coverage of pregnant women with simple state plan amendment rather than federal waiver</p>	<p>Allows coverage of pregnant women with simple state plan amendment rather than federal waiver</p>
<p>Immigrants Allows states to provide coverage to legal immigrant children and pregnant women who have been in the US less than 5 years</p>	<p>No provision</p>
<p>Citizenship documentation States may opt to return to previous rules for proving citizenship for children in Medicaid (in CT, self-declaration usually sufficed to prove citizenship.) Allows additional types of documents to prove citizenship if states continue to require written documentation</p>	<p>Applies new proof of citizenship requirements to SCHIP as well as Medicaid. States may opt to accept Soc. Sec. number and match with Soc. Sec. Admin. to verify ID and citizenship.</p>
<p>Benefits Dental is a guaranteed benefit; establishes mental health parity, states can cover family planning services without a waiver</p>	<p>Provides grants to improve dental care; establishes mental health parity</p>
<p>Medicare Prescription Drug Program Makes various improvements in the Medicare Prescription Drug program</p>	<p>No provision</p>

SCHIP (Cont. from p. 3)

New Federal Restrictions on SCHIP

Under the new CMS directive, to be eligible to use SCHIP funds to provide coverage for children from families with incomes over 250% of the federal poverty level, a state must meet new requirements which include:

The state must have enrolled 95% of eligible children from families with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level in SCHIP or Medicaid. This is an extraordinarily high standard. Currently, no state reaches this level of enrollment.

The number of children insured through private insurance cannot decline by more than 2 percentage points over a 5-year period.

Please refer to table on page 3 for more information on the Senate and House SCHIP Reauthorization bills.

What you can do to support SCHIP

1. Contact Governor Rell and urge her to join other governors in opposing the new SCHIP rules. Connecticut uses SCHIP funds to cover children up to 300% of the federal poverty level so these rules will affect us.

2. Contact your US Senator and US Representative and

- thank him/her for voting for SCHIP reauthorization (all members of the Connecticut delegation voted for reauthorization)

-ask for continued support for reauthorization in September. You can mention provisions that are particularly important to you. The House and Senate versions will have to be merged into one bill in a conference committee so pointing out what provisions you prefer is important.

CABHN Meetings

Upcoming Meeting

CABHN/FESN Meeting

Friday Sept. 7
Friday, Nov. 9
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)
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