

<b>Highlights in this issue:</b>	
Medicaid Lawsuit .....	p 1
Free Income Tax Preparation .....	p 1
Federal Budget Focus .....	p2
Upcoming Legislative Session .....	p 3
One Connecticut Issue Days .....	p 3

# CABHN FEVER

## Settlement Of Lawsuit Means Better Access To Medical Equipment Under Medicaid

The Department of Social Services (DSS) recently settled a class action lawsuit brought by Connecticut Legal Services and New Haven Legal Assistance Association concerning the denial of access to needed medical equipment for Medicaid recipients. Medical equipment includes such items as canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, bed pans, hospital beds, special toilet seats, and oxygen machines. Under the terms of the settlement, DSS has agreed to individually consider any request for equipment even if it is not on its pre-established list of covered medical equipment. This means it will individually assess whether the equipment meets the Department’s definition of durable medical equipment, including whether the equipment ordinarily serves a medical purpose, and whether the equipment is medically necessary for the individual requesting it.

Most importantly, DSS has agreed that an important aspect of “medical necessity” and “medical purpose” is whether the requested equipment helps individuals to attain or retain capability for self care or independence, and to avoid institutional placement. Items such as stair glides and voice-activated environmental control units will be paid for under Medicaid if they are designed primarily to serve the needs of individuals with medical problems, and the request is coming from an individual Medicaid recipient who needs the item to stay in the community.

Items not on DSS’s list may be obtained by having a physician prescribe the equipment and then having a Medicaid-participating supplier of the equipment request “prior authorization” in writing from DSS. To determine whether a supplier is enrolled in the Medicaid program, call a local drug store or medical equipment supply company and ask them if they are enrolled or call DSS at 860-424-5217 and ask for a list of enrolled suppliers. DSS has 20 business days from the date the request is submitted to act on it. If it denies the request, it must issue a written notice to the Medicaid recipient advising of the right to a hearing to challenge the denial.

DSS has a publication titled “How to Get Durable Medical Equipment through the Medicaid Program.” It can be found at [www.dss.state.ct.us/svcs/medical/dme](http://www.dss.state.ct.us/svcs/medical/dme). If you don’t have access to this website and need more information, please contact Kevin Brophy at Connecticut Legal Services, Waterbury Office (203-756-8074, or toll free 800-413-7797), or Sheldon Toubman, at New Haven Legal Assistance Ass’n, (203-946-4811).♦



## Deep Freeze Brings Steep Costs

**Fact:** This winter is the coldest on record in Connecticut since 1980.

**Fact:** This is also the winter during which Connecticut has the lowest level of energy assistance available.

If you are worried about how you’ll

pay your heating bills this winter, apply now! Applications for energy assistance are being accepted now through April 30th (or earlier if funds run out). Applications can take up to 45 days to process, but immediate fuel delivery should be available if needed. ♦

## Free Tax Return Assistance



Where? & When?

**Farnum Neighborhood House**, Fllmore Street, New Haven, February 8

& 15, 2-4PM

**St Peter Church**

695 Colorado Avenue, Bridgeport

February 22

1-3PM

For info, call *Quinnipiac University School of Law Legal Clinic, Maria Rivera* 1-203-582-3238

### Hartford, CT Sites:

#### Capital Community College

950 Main Street, 3rd Floor

February 4th - March 20th

Wednesdays 10am-2pm, Thursdays 5-

8pm and Saturdays 10am-2pm

Call (860)906-5181 for more information

or to make an appointment

#### Casey Family Services and the Boys and Girls Club of Hartford at The Learning Corridor

53 Vernon Street (Commons Building),

February 7th , 14th, 21st, 28th, March

6th and 13th, April 3rd and 10th

Saturdays 9am-1pm APPOINTMENT

ONLY Call (860)727-1030 to make an

appointment

#### Community Renewal Team, Inc.

Visit the CRT website at [www.crtct.org](http://www.crtct.org)

or call(860)560-5128 for site locations

and hours.

#### Hartford Public Library

500 Main Street

February 17th - April 6th

Tuesdays from 5-7pm

**(See Tax Sites pg. 4)**

Call Infoline (211) or the DSS Energy Line (1-800-842-1132) for information on the closest application site. *Bring proof of income for everyone in the house and a copy of your fuel/utility bill when applying.* ♦



## What You Need To Know About Security Deposits

If you are moving, here are some important things to remember to ensure the return of your security deposit:

✓ **You must move out on time.**

If you have a written lease, you should move out by the last day of the lease. If you have a month-to-month oral lease, you should move out by the last day of the month. If you stay longer (even a day longer), your landlord may, in some circumstances, be able to claim another month's rent and deduct that rent from your security deposit.

✓ **Give your landlord your forwarding address in writing as soon as you move out.** Until you do, your landlord does not have to return your security deposit! If you don't know where you will be moving, give the landlord an address at which you will receive mail. Send the letter certified - return receipt requested through the US Post Office so you have proof the letter was sent.

Your landlord has within 30 days of the end of tenancy or 15 days of the receipt of the forwarding address (whichever is later) to either return the security deposit plus interest, or send an itemized written statement of expenses deducted from your security deposit, along with the balance of your deposit and interest.

If you don't hear from your landlord within 30 days after you have moved, (or if you gave a late notice of forwarding address, 15 days after you give him/her the address), contact the Security Deposit Investigator at the State Department of Banking in Hartford at (860) 240-8154 or toll free at 1-800-831-7225. Complaint forms are available from the web site: <http://www.state.ct.us/dob/> ♦



## Federal FY Budget 2005 Will Focus on Cuts

President Bush will release his budget for FY 2005 on February 2nd. The administration's budget is expected to outline a plan for reducing the budget deficit, which is projected to reach a record \$500 billion. Fiscally conservative Congress people have publicly challenged the White House's increase in deficit spending recently, making the deficit the likely focus of the 2005 budget debate. To reduce the deficit, the administration is expected to focus on cutting domestic spending. Some likely targets for cuts are: housing vouchers for the poor, health care for veterans, and programs for job training and employment, as well as a renewed focus on so-called "waste, fraud and abuse" in programs like free and reduced school lunch, among others. The President's budget request will

also include several tax-cut proposals, including incentives for individual savings and tax credits to help uninsured people buy health insurance. In addition to acting on appropriations and the President's budget request, Congress will be eager to wrap up items leftover from 2003 such as energy legislation, the class action bill, TANF Re-Authorization, the transportation bill and pension reform.

It is important to stay in contact with your members of Congress and let them know how you feel about potential cuts to housing, healthcare, TANF, and nutrition programs. To find out how to contact Congressmembers please call Deb Noble at CABHN, 860-278-5688 x12 or [DNoble@LARCC.org](mailto:DNoble@LARCC.org) ♦

## Be a Welfare Voter!

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has launched Welfare Voter 2004!, a grassroots postcard campaign to remind senators that low-income people and allies are a powerful voting block, and that voters want a positive outcome when Congress takes up TANF(welfare) reauthorization this year. Visit [www.afsc.org/welfarevoter](http://www.afsc.org/welfarevoter) to order free packs of postcards or to send an electronic message. For more info, contact [welfarevoter@afsc.org](mailto:welfarevoter@afsc.org), or Roberta Spivek at (215) 241-7037. ♦



## Alternative to Rising Food Cost

Serve New England is a food coop program designed to promote volunteer service by giving deep discounts on the highest quality grocery, meat and vegetable items to community-minded individuals willing to volunteer 2 hours of their time a month to a worthwhile cause. Regardless of age or income, if you are giving your time and energy to anyone outside your immediate family, Serve New England rewards you with top quality food at up to a 50% discount. Food packages are ordered monthly and there are 17 chapters in Connecticut. Check out their website for order information and the chapter nearest you. For more information, go to [www.servenewengland.org](http://www.servenewengland.org) or call toll free: 888-742-7363. ♦

## Save The Date:

**Tuesday, February 24th, 2004**

**Making Women Visible:** A press conference and symposium on women's issues at the state Capitol sponsored by The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) and the Connecticut Women's Agenda (CWA)

9:30 AM - Press Conference, Room 1D  
Legislative Office Building

10:30AM to 12:30PM  
Symposium...lively panel discussions on  
Health Care for Low Income Women

(See Save The Date, pg. 4)



## Legislative Session Starts Feb. 4; Preview of Expected Issues

The regular legislative session is scheduled to start on February 4. A number of issues are expected to be raised early in the session. Of particular importance to low-income people:

Sen. Harp is planning to submit a bill to repeal the requirement that the Department of Social Services seek a waiver of many provisions of the federal Medicaid law in regards to the HUSKY and Medicaid Program. A waiver would allow the state to change the HUSKY and Medicaid programs to require premiums and larger co-pays and to limit the benefits provided by the programs. Legislators are signing on as co-sponsors of this bill before it is submitted. So far, 13 out of 36 Senators and 52 out of 151 Representatives have signed on as co-sponsors. If you are concerned about new fees and new limits on HUSKY and Medicaid, call your senator and representative and urge them to sign on as a sponsor of the Medicaid waiver repeal bill. Legislators can contact Sen. Toni Harp's office at 860-240-0393 to sign on as a co-sponsor.

Rep. Art Feltman plans to submit a bill to repeal the changes in the SAGA medical program and to initiate a planning process which would lead to a more carefully planned and fully funded SAGA medical program. In another blow to health care for very low-income people, in August, the legislature and the Governor adopted legislation which limited the funding for SAGA medical clients and required that health care for SAGA clients be delivered through the community health centers and hospitals. This new program has not been implemented yet and this bill proposes that the plan be reconsidered.

There will be a bill to re-open the state-funded benefits programs for recent legal immigrants. These programs, which provide food stamps, health care and cash assistance to people who are not eligible for federally

funded benefits, have been closed to new applicants since June 30 of 2003.

Sen. Mary Ann Handley plans to introduce a bill early in the session to allocate the TANF bonus funds. It is important that these funds are allocated outside the regular budget process so that the funds, which have been available to the state since last fall, are used now, rather than next fall, to assist families in need. (See article on this page for more details about this issue.)

Finally, the Governor's budget proposal is expected to be announced on February 4. It is expected that there will once again be proposals to cut basic human services. ♦

### Allocating TANF Bonus Funds

On January 15, the Human Services Committee held a public hearing on proposals of ways to use the \$11.8 million dollars in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) bonus dollars which were awarded to the state last fall. The federal government gives High Performance bonus dollars to states that reach certain job placement and retention goals for

welfare clients.

The Welfare Working Group had developed proposals for the use of these funds last fall. These priorities included:

- \$5 million to re-open Connecticut's child care subsidy program, Care4Kids, to low income working families.
- \$2.4 million for job training and education for people receiving TFA cash assistance
- \$1 million for temporary rental assistance and \$300,000 for services to families in a pilot family supportive housing project
- \$2 million for early assessment programs for welfare recipients and
- \$1 million for safety net services for families who have reached time limits for cash welfare benefits.

Advocates stressed the importance of using the bonus funds to support expanded services to the target TANF population, families with children struggling to make the transition from welfare to work or low-income families, rather than using the funds to substitute for state funding in existing programs.

(See TANF pg. 4)

### One Connecticut Issue Days

One Connecticut is organizing days at the legislature to highlight each of the major issues that the coalition has identified as essential for fighting poverty and building economic security. Below are dates for each issue day. For general information, contact Cheri Quickmire at 203-605-9542.

Issue	Date	Color Theme
Quality Education	March 3	Yellow
Affordable Housing	March 10	Purple
Health Care for All	March 24	Red
Effective Democracy	March 31	Blue
Good Jobs and Economic Security	April 7	Orange
Fair Share Tax and Budget	April 14	Green

## Save the Date

(cont. from pg. 2)

Nourishing Good Health: Eating Disorders and Nutrition Policy

Gender Appropriate Policies for Incarcerated Women and Girls

Women and Small Business Development

*Also on February 24, 1-5 pm*

### State Budget Forum

Room 1C, Legislative Office Building, Hartford

*Featured speakers include:*

OPM Secretary Marc Ryan on the Governor's Budget Revisions

Chuck Collins, co-author with Bill Gates Sr. of "Wealth and Our Commonwealth: Why America Should Tax Accumulated Fortunes," and started "Responsible Wealth," the initiative to bring together some of the nation's wealthiest residents to oppose the repeal of the federal estate tax.

## TANF (cont. from pg. 3)

Sen. Mary Ann Handley is preparing a bill to appropriate these funds early in the legislative session, rather than waiting for the regular budget process to be completed.

## Tax Sites (cont. from pg. 1)

Appointment Only  
Call (860)695-6295

Hartford Public Library  
1250 Albany Avenue  
February 4th - April 14th  
Hours: Wednesday 5-8pm  
Appointment Only  
Call (860)695-7380

Hopewell Baptist Church  
265 Enfield Street, Hartford, CT  
February 7th - April 10th  
Tuesday and Thursday 4:30-8pm and  
Saturdays 9am-1pm  
Walk-in Only

*For more Hartford locations, visit  
[www.tymct.org](http://www.tymct.org) or call 860-906-5181.*

## Legal Assistance Resource Center of CT and CABHN (Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs)

80 Jefferson Street  
Hartford, CT 06106

## CABHN Meetings held 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month

9:30 - 11:30 am

### Upcoming Meetings:

February 6<sup>th</sup>

March 5<sup>th</sup>

Community Renewal Team  
(CRT)

555 Windsor St., Hartford

*Topics:*

*Review of Governor's Budget  
Proposal*

*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.*

NONPROFIT ORG  
U S POSTAGE  
PAID  
HARTFORD CT  
PERMIT NO 3377