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# CABHN FEVER

## Are You a Parent with Husky A Coverage?

On April 1, 2005, some parents (those whose coverage was continued as a result of the March 2003 lawsuit) may lose health care coverage if their income is above:

<u>Income for a family of</u>	
1	\$ 9,310
2	\$12,490
3	\$15,670
4	\$18,850
5	\$22,030
6	\$25,210
7	\$28,390

### What can you do?

You will be sent the HUSKY A renewal form. Make sure the information is correct and return the form to DSS.

### Keep this in mind

You may still be eligible for HUSKY if:

- Your income is less than the amounts listed above*
- You are pregnant*
- You are disabled, blind, or you are over 65*
- You have breast or cervical cancer*
- You have high monthly bills*

For more information, call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-842-1421.

### Here's something else you can do

Call your legislator and ask him or her to keep working parents on HUSKY A. Tell your legislator if you do not have employer or other health insurance.

To find your legislator, go to [www.smartvote.org](http://www.smartvote.org) or call:

- Senate Democrats: 1-800-842-1420
- Senate Republicans: 1-800-842-1421
- House Democrats: 1-800-842-8267
- House Republicans: 1-800-842-8270

On February 16, the Appropriations Committee approved HB 6438, which would extend health care coverage for working parents threatened with loss of coverage on April 1. The bill will now go to the House and the Senate and, if approved in each of those Houses of the General Assembly, to the Governor for her approval.

**Now is a crucial time to call your representative, senator and the Governor to support this bill.** (You can check the status of this bill on the LARCC/CABHN website ([www.larcc.org](http://www.larcc.org)) or call Jane McNichol at LARCC (860) 278-5688 (x15) for an update.)❖

## Consumer Resource: Prescription Drug Price Finder

The website of CT's Attorney General Blumenthal includes an important site where consumers can compare the costs of dozens of popular prescription medications at pharmacies in their area. A recent search for Lipitor in Hamden found prices varied from 75 cents to \$2.71 per pill. Prices are updated every 30 days. If you have prescriptions and want to compare prices in your area, go to:

<http://www.cslib.org/attygen/drugprices/prescriptionshome.htm>

Provided by CT Health Notes, [www.cthealthnotes@cthealthpolicy.org](mailto:www.cthealthnotes@cthealthpolicy.org).❖

## Unemployment Comp Filing Is Now Easier

According to State Labor Commissioner Shaun Cashman, Connecticut residents filing a continuing unemployment insurance claim can now visit [www.ct.gov/dol](http://www.ct.gov/dol) and click on the clearly marked icon to complete the process on-line.

Note that on-line filing can only be used **after** a claim has been established by calling the agency's "Dial to File" TeleBenefits automated phone system. The numbers for this vary depending on your area and can be found on the same website by clicking on Claims Filing by Phone. Both filing by phone and using the on-line method follow the same filing days and hours - Monday through Friday, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday from 12 a.m to 11 p.m.

The site also provides additional customer-friendly features, including secured access that allows claimants to review and print out benefit filing history. This information can be obtained Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from 12 a.m. to 11 p.m. Plans are underway to enhance the new Internet system even further so residents can file their initial unemployment compensation claims online.❖

## Food @Your Fingertips

Food@Your Fingertips is an interactive website that allows anyone to check for eligibility for food stamps.

Just go to this web site: [www.foodstampsct.org](http://www.foodstampsct.org). Call End Hunger Connecticut! (EHC!) at 860-560-2100 if you need to talk to someone about food stamps.❖

**Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.**

*John Wooden*

A Question of CHOICE...



Q. I am on Medicare and have a small spenddown after which Medicaid kicks in. Should I call the CHOICES program? Would it matter to me since my drugs, after spenddown, are covered by Medicaid?

A. Since the sum of your two spenddowns (there are two per year) total less than the \$600 Medicare drug benefit for 2005, you don't have to worry which Medicare drug plan you are on. However, for people who have spenddowns that total more than \$600, getting the \$600 Medicare coverage to go further by having a good plan saves them (or delays) the \$30 sign-up fee and the \$16.25/prescription cost of ConnPACE which they will have to turn to when the Medicare drug plan runs out if they have not otherwise met their spenddown.

CHOICES is a program funded by the state and the Older Americans Act. It can be reached at 1-800-994-9422. The program runs through the AAAs (Area Agencies on Aging), who can help Medicare participants find the best Medicare plan for them. ANY client on Medicare Parts A and B, whether they are elderly or not, will be assisted by the CHOICES program to figure out their best Medicare drug plan. NOTE: The phone may be answered by "Senior Resources," the AAA office handling this program.



5 Minutes Can Make a Difference

Advocacy does not have to take a lot of time, and it doesn't have to cost anything.

Here are a few tips:

- 1. Call your legislator. You don't need a bill number or any special expertise, just tell them your views on issues that concern you. They not only welcome your calls, they have staff waiting for you to call. See the end of this article for contact information.
2. Get on the mailing list of an advocacy organization that addresses the issues you care about. CABHN maintains e-mail, fax and mail lists for information on poverty issues. Let us know if you want to be added to the e-mail or fax alert list. Links to other advocacy organizations are on the LARCC website at www.larcc.org.
3. Inform someone. Share your concerns with a friend, family member, or even someone standing next to you in line. Never underestimate how powerful word-of-mouth can be.
4. Write a letter to a policymaker. Writing down your concerns might take

more than five minutes, but it is fairly simple. And as with phone calls, policymakers expect to receive letters; in many cases they rely on getting information from the public (and they trust you far more than a lobbyist).

5. Visit a policymaker. Honest, this can be under the five-minute limit. You may get a knock at your door or be greeted coming out of the grocery store during campaign time by a candidate with literature. Don't run away. Take a minute to stop and ask what the candidate would do about your issue if elected.

6. VOTE. It is critically important that everyone who is eligible to vote exercises that right!

To find your state legislators, go to: www.lwvct.org

Connecticut's US Senators: The Honorable Christopher Dodd www.senate.gov/~dodd/

The Honorable Joseph Lieberman http://lieberman.senate.gov/

To find your US representative, go to http://www.house.gov/writerep/

Thanks to the CT Health Policy Project for these tips. www.cthealthpolicy.org

Revenue Issues in the Governor's Budget Proposal

Governor Rell proposes to address 53.8% of the structural deficit in SFY 06 through cuts in current services spending, and the balance through net revenue increases. Less than half the proposed new revenues (49%) result from permanent changes in taxes and fees that can be expected to generate revenues beyond this biennium, and 43% of these permanent revenues come from "sin" taxes. Another third (33%) of the proposed new revenues come from temporary tax increases, delays in the scheduled phase-out of tax reductions, and other temporary tax changes. The balance (18%) comes from a variety of fund transfers, one-time revenues, and federal funds.

This summary is from a longer report available at the Connecticut Voices for Children website: www.ctkidslink.org.

Art Contest "Justice Is..."



Reminder: The annual "Justice Is..." art contest is in full swing, and the deadline for submissions is March 31, 2005.

Entries can be paintings, drawings, photography, collage - any two-dimensional art. They can be any size, but no larger than 18" x 24". They must be about civil (not criminal) justice. Entrants must be in the 7th or 8th grade and live or go to school within the Greater Hartford Legal Aid (GHLA) service territory (see www.ghla.org for towns).

For details and an entry form, contact Greater Hartford Legal Aid, 860-541-5000.



CABHN Fever is available by email. If you or your organization would like to receive our newsletter by email, please contact dbrown@larcc.org.



## Governor's Two Year Budget Proposal: Key Points

### Health Care

✂ **\$3 co-pays** on office visits, outpatient treatment visits and prescriptions on Medicaid fee-for-service participants.

Fee-for-service participants are generally people who are elderly and disabled. Co-pays not applied to HUSKY participants. (Projected Saving: \$7.8 million first year and \$8.3 million second year).

✂ **SAGA** funding increased by 5% but still limited to appropriations and no expansion of covered services.

✂ **Premiums and co-pays** imposed at lower income levels and increased for **HUSKY B children**. (\$30 a month per child but no more than \$50 per family in "Band 1" - 185% to 235% of federal poverty level. "Band 2" - 236% to 300% of federal poverty level - \$50 per child but no more than \$75 per family). (Projected Savings: \$2.2 million and \$4.8 million).

✂ **Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA)** limited to one year (down from current two years). (Projected Savings: \$0 first year and \$13.4 second year),

✂ **Premium assistance program for working HUSKY A parents** and other low income working parents. (Adds \$.5 million in first year costs; projects savings of \$4.9 million in second year),

✂ **Dually Eligible (for Medicaid and Medicare)** must join Medicare Part D (prescription drug benefit). Not clear if state will pay for drugs not covered by the formulary or protect from higher co-pays. (Projected savings from switch to Part D - \$29.9 million and \$94.6 million).

### Immigrants

✂ **TFA and medical benefits for immigrants** eliminated as of July 1, 2005. (Projected Savings: TFA: \$750,000 and \$750,000; medical \$6.5 million and \$7.1 million),

✂ **Food stamps for immigrants** benefit levels frozen and intake closed as of July 1, 2005. (Projected Savings: \$19,200 and \$54,300).

### Employment/Income Support

✂ No new money for **Jobs First Employment Services (JFES)** but

✂ \$3 million for **21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Fund** (which might be, or at least include, new education and training opportunities for JFES recipients),

✂ Eliminate **state funding for IDA** (Individual Development Accounts) program. (Projected savings: \$250,000 each year).

### Early Care And Education

**Early Childhood Investment Initiative:**

✂ \$5.5 million for preschool education for Statewide Early Childhood Pilot Program (School Readiness)

✂ \$1.0 million for early childhood education teachers scholarships

✂ \$2.0 million in bonds for capital improvements

✂ \$1.0 million as debt service subsidy for new early childhood slots

✂ \$250,000 for technical assistance to local centers

✂ \$300,000 for training to implement the high quality Connecticut pre-school curriculum

✂ **Care4Kids Program** drops funding level from 2004 appropriation of \$72 million to \$71 million, although projected spending for this year is only \$59 million.

### Housing

✂ Create 500 units of **supportive housing** in the next two years and 500 in the following three years.

✂ Provide \$15 million in the first year and \$10 million in the second for bonding for **DECD affordable housing programs**.

✂ Eliminate \$4.8 million in **PILOT** (payment in lieu of taxes) **payments and property tax abatement** grants to municipalities.

✂ Bond for (borrow) \$40 million to pay current operating expenses and use **unclaimed property transferred to the state** over the next ten years to repay the

bonds. This one-time use of the unclaimed property revenues would compete with the State Treasurer's proposal to use unclaimed property to support long-term capital investments in housing (see below).

### Food Assistance

✂ **School Breakfast** funding decreased. Projected savings: \$19,964 dollars in first year and an additional \$32,324 in second year.

✂ No increase in **State Nutrition Assistance Program** (SNAP funds for Food Banks to purchase high protein foods).

✂ Small decreases in the **WIC Program for Fresh Produce** and the **WIC Program for Fresh Produce for Seniors**

✂ \$5 million in bond funds for **farmland preservation** in each year – a total of \$10 million.❖

## State Treasurer's Proposed Housing Trust Fund

State Treasurer Denise Nappier has called for the establishment of a \$100 million Housing Trust Fund for Economic Growth and Opportunity, to be funded by issuing bonds against abandoned property proceeds that are annually transferred to the state. With these resources, Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) would establish a new program of loans and grants to finance affordable homeownership and rental housing. It is estimated that every \$1 of state investment in housing can leverage between \$10 and \$12 in housing production. That means, including interest, the Fund would yield nearly \$1.4 billion in economic activity over the next ten years. Every year, the Fund would generate 750 housing units, an additional 1,290 jobs, and nearly \$42 million in wages paid on an annual basis. Information about this major housing initiative is available at <http://www.state.ct.us/ott/abouthousingtrustfund.htm>.❖



## Save The Dates!

### Schedule of Job Fairs **Next CABHN Meeting: March 4th Focus on IDA's**

Waterbury Fair  
Waterbury Armory  
Tuesday, March 22, 2005  
11 a.m.-3 p.m.


Manchester Fair  
Manchester Community College  
Saturday, April 9, 2005  
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

New London Fair  
Ocean Beach Park  
Tuesday, April 27, 2005  
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

North Haven Fair  
North Haven  
Tuesday, May 24, 2005  
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are matched savings accounts in which low-income individuals and families accumulate funds that can be used for a house, to further education, to start a small business or for other approved asset-building purposes.

IDA's will be the topic of the day for the next CABHN meeting. How are they working in Connecticut? Are there ways to make them work better?

Guest speakers will include Jim Horan, CAHS; Tim Cole, Co-opportunity; and Marie Hawe, CTE. There will also be a video presentation that includes stories from IDA participants. Join us and learn on March 4th! 

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

9:30 - 11:30 am

#### Upcoming Meeting:

**March 4th**

The Lyceum  
227 Lawrence Street  
Hartford, CT

Topics:

*Special Focus on IDA's  
(Individual Development Accounts)*

*See you there!*

*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)  
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