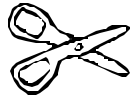


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CABHN FEVER



State Implements Cuts In Medical Services To Medicaid And SAGA Clients

The Department of Social Services (DSS) has announced how they will implement the funding cuts to Medicaid & SAGA which were adopted by the legislature and the Governor in the last session.

Medicaid

In notices to clients, DSS informed **adult** Medicaid clients (parents in HUSKY A and other adults receiving medical care through Medicaid, usually people who are disabled or elderly) that services from the following providers would not be paid for by Medicaid as of January 1, 2003:

Podiatrists Chiropractors Naturopaths

Independent physical therapists

Independent speech pathologists

Independent audiologists

Independent psychologists

Services of physical therapists, speech pathologists, audiologists and psychologists available through places like clinics, hospitals, and outpatient centers should not be affected.

NOTE: These changes do not affect services for children (up to age 21) in HUSKY A.

SAGA

Services available through the SAGA and GA medical programs are also being limited as a result of laws passed in the last session. The SAGA/GA cuts for services from physical therapists, speech pathologists, audiologists and psychologists are broader than those cuts in Medicaid and are probably not authorized by the statute. **It is particularly important that SAGA recipients affected by these cuts contact Statewide Legal Services to clarify their rights.**

As of January 1, 2003, SAGA and GA will not pay for services from:

Podiatrists Chiropractors Naturopaths
 Home Health Care Providers
 Optometrists and Opticians (including eyeglasses)
 Physical Therapists Audiologists
 Speech Pathologists Psychologists

If your medical services are being cut as a result of these changes, or you have questions about the changes, DSS suggests that you contact your managed care member services division at the following numbers: **p**

BlueCare Family Plan	(800) 554-1707
Community Health Network of CT	(800) 859-9889
HealthNet Healthy Options	(800) 820-0210
Preferred One	(800) 925-3606

Clients with questions who are not part of a managed care organization should call their DSS worker.

If you are losing medical services as a result of any of these changes or have questions please contact Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320.

Mayors Say Requests for Food & Shelter Up

Washington, DC - As housing costs continued to rise faster than incomes and the national economy remained weak, requests for emergency food assistance increased an average of 19% over the past year, according to a 25-city survey released December 18th by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The survey also found that requests for emergency shelter assistance grew an average of 19% in the 18 cities that reported an increase, the steepest rise in a decade.

The participating cities were most likely to attribute hunger in their communities to high housing costs, low paying jobs, rising unemployment, and the nation's economic downturn.

As the need increased, the level of resources available to meet that need decreased. Emergency Food Assistance site donations dropped in 52% of cities surveyed while at the same time these same cities experienced an increase of 35% in usage. And nearly two-thirds of these emergency food sites reported they had to decrease the quantity of food provided per family and/or the number of times a family can come to them for assistance.

People remained homeless for an average of six months in the survey cities, a figure that increased from one year ago in all but four cities. Single men comprised 39 percent of the homeless population, families with children 39 percent, single women 12 percent, and unaccompanied youth two percent. Seventy-three

percent of homeless families in the survey cities are headed by single parents. It is estimated that substance abusers account for 32 percent of the homeless population in the survey cities and persons considered mentally ill account for 23 percent. Twenty-two percent of the homeless in survey cities are employed. Ten percent are veterans.

All the cities in the survey expect that requests for both emergency food assistance and shelter assistance will increase again over the next year.

If you would like more information, the complete survey can be downloaded for free or a hard copy can be ordered for \$20 by going to www.usmayors.org or by contacting Andy Solomon, the U. S. Conference of Mayors at (202) 861-6766. ♦

End of UC Extension: Effects on Jobless and State Economy

In the wake of the economic downturn after September 11th, Congress passed a 13 week extension of unemployment compensation (UC) benefits funded entirely by the federal government. Eligible unemployed workers could receive up to 39 weeks of benefits (26 weeks of regular benefits plus the 13 week extension). This federal extension will end on December 28. An estimated 12-13,000 unemployed workers in Connecticut will lose their extended benefits - even if they haven't used up their 13 weeks.

In addition, it is estimated that another 30,000 have already exhausted their UC benefits and another 8,600 will join their ranks in the next few months for a total of approximately 50,000 affected workers. This will hurt both unemployed workers and the economy. The unemployed will not have the money to pay basic living expenses, and our struggling state and local economies will suffer further. National studies estimate that each \$1 of UC results in \$2.15 in economic growth.

What can you do about this problem? Tell your federal legislators to do the right thing for the unemployed and the economy: Extend UC benefits now. Tell your local legislators and the Governor to contact federal lawmakers and urge them to extend benefits. ❖



Report: Union Representation Benefits Women in Retail

A report from the Institute for Women's Policy and Research (IWPR) shows that the majority of employees in the retail industry are women. The report shows conclusively that women with union representation (including single mothers and part-time female workers) earn higher incomes, have better health care coverage, and better pension benefits.

Highlights include these facts:

Unionized women working full-time in the retail food industry have average hourly earnings of \$10.98, compared to \$8.28 for nonunionized women - an advantage of 33%. The wage advantage for women union members who work part-time in retail food also is 33 percent.

Women in unions are twice as likely as nonunionized women in the retail food industry to be covered by employer-provided health insurance plans (64.0 percent vs. 33.0 percent).

More than twice as many unionized women workers in the retail food industry receive all or part of their health insurance premium payments from their employers as opposed to their non-union counterparts (62.1 percent vs. 29.3 percent).

For the full report go to: <http://www.iwpr.org> or contact Susan Phillips, Secretary-Treasurer, Coalition of Labor Union Women 202.466.1545❖

Avoiding Cruel Choices

The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law has produced a guide for policymakers and organizations on Medicaid's role in preventing custody relinquishment. The guide details the growing national crisis in children's mental health services and describes state policy options for increasing families' access to such services.

<http://www.bazelon.org/issues/children/publications/TEFRA/index.htm>

How to File for Unemployment Benefits

Generally, you apply for unemployment by telephone. In some situations, you'll be able to apply in person at the nearest unemployment office. For example, if you don't have a phone, or you have a physical or mental disability, you can apply in person.


Your employer should give you a **separation packet** when your job ends. This packet will have an application and instructions on how to file your claim by telephone using the TeleBenefits "Dial to File" system. A form ("pink slip") which your employer fills out is also in the package. If your employer didn't give you a pink slip or separation packet, you should apply anyway by calling or going to the nearest unemployment office. (See the blue pages of the phone book).❖

Building Bridges:

From Conviction to Employment
Wednesday, January 15, 2003
Central Connecticut State University
New Britain, CT

Join professionals from the fields of workforce development, state agencies, business, legislative and judicial branches of government in examining the barriers encountered by ex-offenders when seeking employment and how the national pilot "Justice Reinvestment" initiative may help.

For registration information, email Andrew.J.Clark@po.state.ct.us or call the office of Rep. William Dyson at 1-800-842-8267.❖

Call Your Legislator 	House Democrats	1-800-842-1902
	House Republicans	1-800-842-1423
	Senate Democrats	1-800-842-1420
	Senate Republicans	1-800-842-1421
	Governor's Office	1-800-406-1527
	Sen. Christopher Dodd - 860-258-6940 or 1-202-224-2823	
	Sen. Joseph Lieberman - 860-549-8463 or 1-202-224-4041	

Save the Date: Rally on Wednesday, January 8th - Opening day of the 2003-4 Legislative Session. 12:00 Noon Rally at the State Capitol. Tell Governor Rowland and the legislators to raise revenue to close the budget gap by limiting corporate tax breaks and raising income taxes on the wealthiest. ❖

Legislative NEWS



State Budget Problems Still Unresolved

On December 6, the Governor announced his plan to address the projected budget deficit of \$500 million in this year's budget. The Governor's plan includes:

- \$200 million in tax increases (\$90 million from adopting a surtax on incomes over \$1 million)

- \$94 million in concessions from state employees or in cuts to the Educational Cost Sharing program which provides aid to towns for education.

- \$200 million in additional spending cuts. Programs affected by these cuts would include:

SAGA cash and medical benefits - **eliminate as of February 1, 2003.**

Safety Net - **eliminate as of 12/31/02.**

Food Stamps for Legal Immigrants - **eliminate as of 12/31/02.**

Transitory Rental Assistance Program (T-RAP) - **eliminate as of 12/31/02. About 165 families receiving rental assistance would be cut off effective 12/31/02.**

HUSKY - HUSKY A **limited to parents at 100% of poverty (instead of 150%); HUSKY B enrollment frozen as of April 1, 2003.**

Child Care Assistance - **limit to families at 50% of area median income (instead of 75%). Unclear whether this change would apply to all child care subsidy programs.**

Temporary Family Assistance - **limit families to two six-month extensions of cash assistance (rather than three currently) unless the family demonstrates severe, multiple barriers to employment.**

The Governor convened the General Assembly in special session to consider his proposals on December 18. No action was taken on the 18th and the expectation

is that the General Assembly will not reconvene until after the new year. Legislative leaders are predicting that action will be taken on these proposals before the new legislature convenes on January 8. Legislative leaders will be meeting in the meantime to develop a plan.

One Connecticut is proposing a budget plan to address the \$1.5 billion deficit projected for the 2003-04 budget year that would not include severe cuts. The plan relies on generating revenue from wealthy taxpayers and businesses. If adopted early in the year, the new revenue would also help solve the \$500 million deficit for this year.

Elements of *One Connecticut* plan:

Personal Income Tax	\$564M
(on incomes over \$200,000)	
Estate, Gift and Inheritance Taxes	\$92 M
Business Taxes	\$418 M
Sales Tax	\$116 M
Tobacco Taxes	\$73.5 M
Other	\$ 70 M

Other *One Connecticut* proposals include maximizing federal funds coming into Connecticut, making smarter spending decisions, obtaining concessions from state employees, restoring funding for needed services, requiring more information about taxes collected and who is affected by them and setting up a Blue Ribbon Commission on Taxation to recommend ways to update Connecticut's outmoded tax system.

To help preserve needed services, call legislative leadership (Sen. Sullivan, Harp, Crisco and Looney at 1-800-842-1420 or Rep. Lyons, Dyson and Amann at 1-800-842-1902) and tell them to support revenue increases rather than service cuts. ❖

New Laws Effective January, 2003

As of January 1, 2003 some new laws went into effect. A few that may be of interest are:

Public Act 02-33 - As of January 1st, 2003 the minimum wage in Connecticut will increase to \$6.90 per hour and as of January 1st 2004 the minimum wage will rise to \$7.10 per hour.

Public Act 02-7 - This act requires that an Alternative Base Period (ABP) be used in calculating Unemployment Compensation for the next 3 years. The ABP formula is used for claimants who are ineligible for unemployment compensation because they do not have sufficient earned income during the standard base period. This act requires the use of a worker's wages from the most recently completed quarter if the worker is not eligible using the standard base period.

To find out more about the new laws that were created during the last session, please order your copy of "**Summary of Public and Special Acts**" from LARCC at 860-278-5688. The cost for this booklet is \$15 and there is a limited supply. ❖

Fact Sheets From the Children's Health Council

The Governor's budget proposal calls for elimination of HUSKY for adults, freezing enrollment in HUSKY B, the elimination of the Children's Health Council, and other changes that will affect the HUSKY program. To find out how this cut will impact your community check out their fact sheets on line at:

www.childrenshealthcouncil.org/news/budget/HUSKYbudget.pdf



Quick Tip on Contacting Federal Legislators:

Word from advocates in Washington, DC is that the best way to contact U.S. Senators and Representatives is by **faxing letters**.

Mailed letters are delayed by MONTHS as a result of anthrax protections. E-mails are often responded to by staff assigned just to that task and are often not passed on to the Congressperson or to the staff person working on a particular issue. ❖

Help With Your Taxes

The IRS has created a new toll-free telephone number to provide taxpayers with better service. People looking for their refunds have a new toll-free number: 1-800-829-1954 The Refund Hotline.

Individuals who filed a 1040, a 1040-A or a 1040-EZ return can check on the status of their current year tax refund with this toll-free number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There are also other numbers you can call for help when filing your 2002 Tax Return:

*800-829-1040, IRS Tax Help Line for Individuals

*800-829-3676, Forms and Publications

*877-777-4778, National Taxpayer Advocate's Help Line

*800-829-4477, Tele-Tax System

For more information about these services and others please go to the IRS website at: www.irs.gov or just call one of numbers listed above. ❖



Save the Date!

Wed. Jan. 15th, 2003

Dialogue on Election Day Voter Registration 1-4 PM

State Capitol, Room 310

(Snow date January 17th 9:30-12:30)

Who should attend?: Registrars of Voters, State Legislators, and Advocates

Speakers that day include: Sen. Don DeFronzo and Rep. Rep. Jim O'Rourke, in addition to Ludovic Blain, Democracy Project, Demos, and Juan Figueroa, Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund.

For more information or to confirm attendance please call Emily Bailey or Minaren Bozeman at DemocracyWorks 860-727-1157 or by email at DemocracyWorks@attbi.com

Sponsored by the Coalition for Effective Democracy, Demos, and One Connecticut ❖

CABHN Meetings

held 2nd Friday of the month

10 - Noon

Friday January 10th

Friday February 14th

Community Renewal Team
555 Windsor St., Hartford

Topics:

Legislative & Budget Update
TANF Reauthorization
& More

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

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