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# CABHN FEVER



## **Free Tax Preparation Services**

Free tax preparation services are available during the tax season, January 15 through April 15, each year in many communities around Connecticut. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites are intended for people whose income is below \$50,000 a year. IRS-trained volunteers who are certified to prepare simple tax returns provide this free service. This service saves each filer an average of \$150, and volunteers are trained to let filers know if they qualify for additional tax credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit. Taxes can be filed electronically, in which case, refunds are usually received within 7-10 days.

### **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**

The EITC is widely regarded as the single most effective program that lifts low-income working families out of poverty. Working families with incomes up to \$48,279 qualify for the federal EITC, which may provide a credit of up to \$5,657. Each year, over 150,000 Connecticut households in every rural, suburban, and urban community claim the EITC, bringing back hundreds of millions of dollars directly to low-wage earners. Working families with children and incomes between \$12,000 and \$18,000 usually benefit the most. A combination of free tax preparation services at a VITA site, and the potentially large return from the EITC can really help to boost a family's savings or bank account.

There are over 70 VITA sites around the state open to the public for the 2009-10 tax preparation season. For information on site locations and hours, please call Infoline at 2-1-1.

## **No Insurance? Free Health Clinic in Hartford February 3rd**



The National Association of Free Clinics (NAFC) is sponsoring a one-day C.A.R.E. Clinic (Communities Are Responding Everyday) on Wednesday, February 3, 2010 from 12:00-7:00 p.m. at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. The Connecticut C.A.R.E. Clinic is a free health clinic for anyone who is uninsured in the state. Patients will receive preventive primary care services including screenings for cholesterol, blood pressure, blood glucose, HIV, pregnancy, and vision. This clinic will also connect the uninsured with safety-net providers such as free clinics, sliding scale clinics and federally qualified health centers

located near where the uninsured live so that the patients may receive regular treatment on an ongoing basis.

The clinic is free but you must schedule an appointment by calling 877-233-5159.

Health care professionals from all specialties as well as non-medical volunteers – including high school, college and health profession students are needed to support this one day clinic. Opportunities for non-medical professionals exist as well. To find out more about volunteer opportunities, visit [www.regonline.com/ctcare](http://www.regonline.com/ctcare). (See Insert Poster For Clinic)

## **Pfizer Program For Unemployed Extended Through Dec. 31, 2010**

This new program, called MAINTAIN (Medicines Assistance for Those who Are in Need) is designed to help recently unemployed Americans and their families who have lost their insurance and who are taking Pfizer medicines to continue treatment at no cost for up to one year. The program will be open for enrollment through December 31, 2010 and applies to eligible Americans who have become unemployed since January 1, 2009. Eligibility requirements of the MAINTAIN program include: loss of employment since January 1, 2009; prescribed and taking a Pfizer medicine for at least 3 months prior to unemployment and enrolling in the program; lack of prescription drug coverage; and can attest to financial hardship. Those who qualify will receive their Pfizer medicines at no cost for up to 12 months or until they become re-insured (whichever occurs first). Over 70 Pfizer primary care medicines will be available through the program. For more information, including how to apply, call 1-866-706-2400 or go to: [www.PfizerHelpfulAnswers.com](http://www.PfizerHelpfulAnswers.com).

## **Need a Break on Your Food Bill?**

Angel Food Ministries is a non-profit, non-denominational organization dedicated to providing food relief and financial support to communities throughout the country.

Angel Food is available in a quantity that can fit into a medium sized box at \$30 per unit. Each month's menu is different and consists of both fresh and frozen items with an average retail value of approximately \$60. Generally, one

**(See Break on Food Bill p. 4)**

**Subscribe and receive CABHN Fever Newsletters and Alerts electronically. Contact Ellen Small (ESmall@larcc.org or call 860-278-5688 x208)**



### **New On-line News Source Available: The CT Mirror**

The Connecticut Mirror is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit news organization created to reinvigorate coverage of Connecticut’s state government, public policy and politics. *The site is scheduled to launch January 25<sup>th</sup>.*

The primary goal is to ensure that people all over the state are better informed about their government and its activities, so they can more effectively participate in the development of public policy and hold officials accountable for understanding and addressing the state’s needs. The Connecticut Mirror will achieve this goal through original and reliable reporting presented on the website, [www.ctmirror.org](http://www.ctmirror.org), and distributed through various other platforms and technologies. It also intends to encourage and facilitate discussion and debate on public policy matters; to create an archive of documents and data about state government; and to help train a new generation of journalists.

The website’s goal is to reach all of Connecticut’s 1.4 million households. As a result, it will seek the help of distribution partners, other media outlets, community groups, libraries, foundations, schools and colleges, businesses and individuals, *people like you*.

The CT Mirror is not another blog. It is a news site that aims to combine the best of traditional and contemporary media. Writers will use their years of experience in journalism to break new ground with significant original reporting on the big issues and ideas of the day. They also will use the immediacy and flexibility of the Internet to provide background and context, to connect with the best work others are doing and to deliver breaking news. In addition, being online will allow the site to establish and build a library of past stories, databases, government and

non-government reports, and original source documents, and to make that information easily accessible to users. Finally, the Internet will encourage communication between Connecticut’s residents and their public officials. The Connecticut Mirror will report, analyze, explain, and investigate the activities of state government, reasserting the “watchdog” role of the media.

### **Can CT Households Really Save on Their Electric Bills?**

There has been recent publicity encouraging CL&P and UI customers to sign up for generation services provided by another company to save on their electric bills. If you sign up for an alternative generation service, you would remain a customer of either CL&P or UI which would still bill you for your electric service and charge for things like metering and the power lines to get service to your home, but the electricity charges on your bill would be set by the generation company. You could save a small amount of money on your electric bill by switching generation companies. For an estimate of how your monthly bill could be affected, go to: [ctenergyinfo.com](http://ctenergyinfo.com) and follow these steps:

- ✓ Click on “Choose an Electric Supplier” on the bottom of the blue box on the left side of the page;
- ✓ Click on “Choose Your Residential Rate”, then click on the box for the utility company from which you receive service (CL&P or UI);
- ✓ Look at your monthly electric bill to figure out how many kWh you typically use each month, then enter that on the line beginning “Estimated monthly ...” – if you don’t enter anything, it will assume you use 700 kWh per month and the estimated savings could be very different than what you would actually experience.
- ✓ Scroll down the page for estimated savings if you purchased generation services from various companies.

It is important to note that the estimated savings are just that: *estimated*. Some generation companies require contracts for extended periods like six months or a year – if CL&P and UI rates go down, and they may with gas price reductions, then the savings indicated may be erased or eroded. In some cases the rate you are charged can vary from month to month, also erasing or eroding any savings. Some customers have suddenly found themselves purchasing generation services from CL&P or UI again as their alternative generation company stopped providing services at a rate less than CL&P or UI charged.

When electric deregulation was passed in 1998, legislators expected competition would drive Connecticut’s high electric rates down. However, CT rates went from high to the highest electric rates on the continental U.S.

The only currently reliable way to save on your electric bill is to conserve. If you haven’t already done so, sign up for conservation services.

Conservation help is free to low income renters and homeowners. When you apply for energy assistance at the local Community Action Agency, you can ask for conservation help. You can also contact your electric company for help:

<b>WRAP (CL&amp;P)</b>	1-800-388-9727
<b>UI Helps</b>	1-877-947-3873
<b>Bozrah</b>	860-889-7388
<b>Groton</b>	860-446-4000
<b>Jewett City</b>	860-376-2955
<b>Norwich</b>	860-887-2555
<b>S. Norwalk</b>	203-866-3366
<b>Norwalk Third Taxing District</b>	203-866-9271
<b>Wallingford</b>	203-294-2263

Homeowners who are not eligible for free assistance can sign up for an energy audit and conservation services through their electric company for \$75. The average home gets about \$700 in conservation services at the same time they receive the audit. CL&P and UI customers sign up at [www.ctenergyinfo.com](http://www.ctenergyinfo.com), click on “CT Energy Efficiency Fund” on the top bar, then click on

**(See Electric Bills p. 4)**

## Legal Immigrants Again Eligible for HUSKY A/Medicaid

As a result of a court decision in the Pham v. Starkowski lawsuit, the Department of Social Services is reinstating medical coverage for approximately 4,600 documented non-citizens in Connecticut retroactive to December 1, 2009. On January 8th, the Connecticut Superior Court in Pham v. Starkowski denied the State's motion to delay implementation of the court's ruling pending an appeal. Almost all of the affected individuals are parents enrolled in HUSKY A (Medicaid). The Department is also re-opening the program to new applicants as a result of the court ruling.

- Individuals whose HUSKY A/Medicaid coverage was discontinued will receive written notices explaining that the program has been reopened and they will be reinstated retroactively. These are legal immigrants in the US for less than five years.
- The Department is also notifying its staff and HUSKY/Medicaid providers that the program is again open. For providers, a notice is posted on the [Connecticut Medical Assistance Program](#) web site, as well as going out on the cover page of provider remittance advices that are mailed out on the 12th and 13th next week. DSS is also mailing a provider bulletin with the information.

Please note that regardless of the Court's decision and the results of any appeal, recent legal immigrant children and pregnant women will remain eligible for HUSKY A and B or Medicaid, as will other legal immigrants who have been in the US for more than five years. In addition, recent legal immigrants will remain eligible if they are a) receiving home care services, or b) currently residing in nursing homes and already covered under the state funded program, or

who applied for state funded coverage before September 8, 2009.

Attorneys at Greater Hartford Legal Aid are working to facilitate enrollment for those with immediate medical needs. For more information about the legal case or if someone is experiencing difficulty obtaining coverage under the program, please contact Greater Hartford Legal Aid attorneys:

- Nick Yorio:** (860)541-5053  
[nyorio@ghla.org](mailto:nyorio@ghla.org)  
**Greg Bass:** (860)541-5018,  
[gbass@ghla.org](mailto:gbass@ghla.org)  
**Sue Garten:** (860)541-5020,  
[sgarten@ghla.org](mailto:sgarten@ghla.org)

## On-Line Parenting Courses Do Not Comply

Parenting education programs are classes designed to educate adults about the many issues children face when their family situation changes. If you have children under age eighteen, you must participate in a parenting education program within sixty (60) days after a family case is filed in court. All parties involved in divorce, dissolution of a civil union, annulment, separation, custody or visitation cases are required by law to participate in a parenting education program. Both judges and family support magistrates have the authority to order your participation in the program.

Be aware that ON-LINE Parenting Education Programs are NOT APPROVED and DO NOT COMPLY with Connecticut law, despite some of the sites' claims to the contrary. Parents can access the list of APPROVED Parent Education Providers at the State of CT Judicial Branch website <http://www.jud.ct.gov/Publications/FM151.pdf>.

## Care 4 Kids To Remain Open Until at Least Jan. 31, 2010

Connecticut's Care 4 Kids child care assistance program continues to be open for services to eligible working families. In addition, the program has raised the income limit to allow more working families to qualify.

The program will NOT close to working families as of December 31, 2009, as previously announced. It will remain open to working families until at least January 31, 2010.

The Care 4 Kids program helps families pay their child care costs to help parents stay employed. It also helps families on Temporary Family Assistance who are working or learning skills to obtain employment.

### The Care 4 Kids program is:

- accepting new applications from working families with annual earnings up to 75% of the state median income level (i.e., \$73,281 for a family of four). This level is higher than the traditional eligibility ceiling of 50% of state median income to apply.
- allowing currently-served families to remain eligible until their earnings reach 75% of the state median income level.

For information about submitting applications or general information about Care4Kids, please visit [www.ctcare4kids.com](http://www.ctcare4kids.com) or call 1-888-214-KIDS (5437) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

*\*Information obtained from CT Dept. of Social Services information brief.*

### **Policy Changes Will Impact Prescription Access...if you are affected, share your story!**

State policy changes impacting prescription drug access will be implemented over the coming months. These changes impact people on Medicaid (including HUSKY A), SAGA, ConnPACE and those on Medicare Part D.

If you or someone you know or work with has trouble getting drugs or medication prescribed by their doctor resulting in medication disruption and/or other adverse consequences, please contact NAMI-CT (Alicia or Amy) or Keep the Promise

**(See Share Your Story p. 4)**

## Share Your Story

(cont. from p. 3)

Coalition (Cheri or Maura) at 800-215-3021 to report it.

### Problems at the pharmacy may include:

- 1) The program won't pay for the drug and person does not have the money to cover the cost.
- 2) The pharmacy tells them their doctor has to ask for prior authorization
- 3) The patient does not have the money for the co-pay (only applies to people on both Medicare and Medicaid)

Please join in the effort to document medication disruptions and humanize the harm and cost of creating barriers to needed treatment.

## Electric Bills (cont. from p. 2)

"Residential Customers" under your utility company's logo. Customers of municipal utilities can call their company at the same number listed above for low income programs.

## Break on Food Bill

(cont. from p. 1)

of approximately \$60. Generally, one unit of food assists in feeding a family of four for about one week or a single senior citizen for almost a month. There are no second hand items, no damaged or out-dated goods, no dented cans without labels and no day-old breads or overripe produce.

There is no limit to the number of units a person can receive, and there are no applications to complete or income qualifications to adhere to. Angel Food Ministries also participates in the U.S. Food Stamp program. Find out more information on ordering and where distribution sites are in Connecticut at [www.angelfoodministries.com](http://www.angelfoodministries.com)

## Upcoming CABHN/FESN Meeting

**Friday**

**Feb. 5, 2010**

**9:30-11:30 A.M.**

**Location:**

**Community Renewal Team  
(CRT)  
555 Windsor Avenue  
Hartford, CT**

**Topics:**

**Governor's Budget  
Proposal, Outlook for  
2010 Legislative Session**

*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)**  
44 Capitol Ave., Suite 301  
Hartford, CT 06106



Communities Are Responding Everyday  
C.A.R.E. Clinic

***NO HEALTH INSURANCE?  
WE CAN & WANT TO HELP YOU!***

**FREE HEALTH CLINIC FOR THE UNINSURED**

**Connecticut Convention Center,  
Hartford, Connecticut  
100 Columbus Boulevard  
Hartford, CT 06103**

***Wednesday, February 3, 2010  
12:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.***

**CALL 877-233-5159 TO REGISTER**

**You must register. Walk-ins will be seen only on a limited basis  
Sorry - no guarantee unless you have an appointment.**

**Parking will be free.**

Please note:

- This event is for those WITHOUT insurance. Recipients of Medicare, Medicaid or Veterans Administration benefits are not eligible.
- If you are taking medications, please bring your medicine bottles

***Wednesday, February 3, 2010  
12:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.***

**CALL 877-233-5159 TO REGISTER**



Communities Are Responding Everyday  
C.A.R.E. Clinic

**NO TIENE SEGURO DE SALUD?  
PODEMOS Y QUEREMOS AYUDARLO!**

**CLÍNICA DE SALUD GRATIS PARA PERSONAS SIN SEGURO**

Connecticut Convention Center,  
Hartford, Connecticut  
100 Columbus Boulevard  
Hartford, CT 06103

***Miércoles, 3 de Febrero***  
***12:00p.m.-7: 00 p.m.***

**LLAME AL 877-233-5159 PARA INSCRIBIRSE**

**Usted debe registrarse. Pacientes sin cita serán atendidos sólo en forma limitada**

**Lo sentimos - no garantizamos su atención a menos que usted tenga una cita.**

**El estacionamiento será libre.**

Tenga en cuenta:

- Este evento es para aquellos SIN seguro medico. Los beneficiarios de Medicare, Medicaid o de la Administración de Beneficios Veteranos no califican para recibir estos servicios.
- Si está tomando medicamentos, por favor traiga su medicina

***Miércoles, 3 de Febrero***  
***12:00p.m.-7: 00 p.m.***

**LLAME 877-233-5159 PARA INSCRIBIRSE**