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# CABHN FEVER

## Court Appeal Update



### **Husky-A Coverage for Working Families to Remain in Place Through August**

A request to stop the state from terminating medical insurance for 19,000 working parents was granted in the Second District Court on June 26. The stay extends HUSKY-A coverage for these parents through the end of August.

The stay comes in the form of an injunction, entered in response to a request in the appeal filed in June by three legal groups representing 19,000 working families. A full hearing on the merits of the appeal is scheduled for the week of August 4. The timing of the hearing means that coverage will be extended through August.

The appeal from the federal district court decision was filed June 9 by attorneys from Connecticut Legal

Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, and New Haven Legal Assistance Association.

If you have received a letter stating that your HUSKY coverage has been discontinued, you should call your DSS worker and find out if you are one of the 19,000 clients who are affected by this appeal. For more information or if you have questions, please call:

HUSKY Infoline: 1-877-CT-HUSKY  
(1-877-284-8759)

INFO line: 2-1-1

Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs: 860-278-5688 x 12.

Statewide Legal Services  
1-800-453-3320 or  
860-344-0380

## **ConnPACE Costs Increase, Changes Proposed**

Effective this past April, out-of-pocket costs increased dramatically for the elderly (65 and older) and disabled enrolled in the state's prescription drug benefit program, ConnPACE. The annual registration fee increased from \$25 to \$30, and co-payments jumped from either \$12 or \$15 to \$16.25. The aforementioned figures apply to ALL ConnPACE beneficiaries.

In addition, the State's ConnPACE Waiver is still under review at the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. To summarize, the waiver proposal would increase the ConnPACE income limits to 300% of the federal poverty level, but prevent individuals from using the entire cost of the drug purchased under ConnPACE to count toward their Medicaid spend down.

Visit the ConnPACE web site at <http://connpace.com> for more information about the program. ♦

## **Summer Food Service Program**

When school is out, kids who rely on School Breakfast and Lunch during the school year need somewhere to go to get nutritious food. That's where the Summer Food Service Program comes in. The Summer Food Program is offered at various sites around the state and many sites are open to any kid who wants a meal.

To find the site closest to you call Infoline 2-1-1, End Hunger Connecticut! (860) 296-1127 or visit the CT State Department of Education web-site- [www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/nutrition/index.htm](http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/nutrition/index.htm). ✍

## **Immigrant Freedom Ride 9/20-10/4/2003**



The Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride (IWFR) is a national mobilization to focus public attention on immigrant rights and the injustices of current immigration policies. In September 2003 thousands will set out from nine major cities in the U.S. - Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Houston, Miami, Boston, Chicago and Minneapolis - and cross the country. Everyone will meet in Washington D.C. to meet with Congress on October 1st and 2nd and then head off to New York for a mass rally on Saturday, October 4th.

For more information, contact the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride at [iwfride@immigrantworkersfreedomride.com](mailto:iwfride@immigrantworkersfreedomride.com) or go to their website at [www.iwfr.org](http://www.iwfr.org).

Local Contacts for the Immigrant Freedom Ride:

In the Fairfield Area: Shannon Jacovino at (203)667-7733 or

Thomas Frampton at (203)619-3256

In the Hartford Area: Jeremy Haicken at (860) 246-2561

In Eastern CT: Olie Hermanson at (860)478-4990 ♦

Unfortunately many communities around the state do not offer a Summer Food Program. If you are interested in learning more about how the Summer Food Service Program can benefit kids in your community call End Hunger Connecticut!- (860) 296-1127. ♦

### **Statewide Legal Services**

Hartford & Middletown Call 344-0380  
Toll Free 1-800-453-3320

Applications Taken:  
9am-3pm Mon-Fri  
5:30-7:30 pm Thurs.

## New Rules For Getting Prescription Drugs Under Medicaid, SAGA And ConnPACE

On July 16, the Department of Social Services implemented a plan requiring "prior authorization" for many prescription drugs for people in the Medicaid, SAGA and ConnPACE programs.

Under prior authorization, you may not be able to get a prescription filled at pharmacy if your doctor or pharmacist has not gone through the required procedures to authorize your receiving a particular drug. The state believes that requiring prior authorization for certain drugs will encourage doctors to prescribe other, cheaper drugs and thereby save the state money.

As of July 16, prior authorization is required for:

- (1) drugs costing over \$500 for a one-month supply;
- (2) name brand drugs for which there is a generic equivalent (even if the doctor writes "no substitution" or "brand medically necessary" on the prescription); and
- (3) "early refills" (defined as a refill requested before someone should have used up at least 75% of the previous month's supply). ConnPACE recipients cannot get early refills, even with prior authorization, if medications are lost, destroyed or needed in advance because the recipient will be away when the refill would normally be needed.

Even if a proper request for prior authorization is submitted, the state contractor can deny the request for a specific drug. If that happens, you have a right to a written notice of this denial with information about how to appeal that decision.

If you are unable to get your prescription filled at the pharmacy because prior authorization is needed and was not obtained:

### Here's what you can do...

- ✓ Call your doctor and ask him or her to request prior authorization.
- ✓ Ask the pharmacist for an immediate 5-day supply. If the pharmacist refuses to provide this, tell them to call ACSHealthCare (1-866-759-4113) and ask for authorization for such a temporary supply.
- ✓ If you are unable to get a temporary 5-day supply, or have other drug access problems related to the new requirements for prior authorization, please report this to one of the people or agencies below:

#### For Seniors: Area Agencies on Aging- Aging Resource Centers

Western	203-757-5449
South Western	203-533-9288
North Central	860-724-6443
Eastern	800-690-6998

**For people with Mental Health Issues** National Alliance for the Mentally Ill 800-215-3021

**For people with HIV/AIDS** AIDS Legal Network (Jesus Gomez) 888-380-3646

**For others:** New Haven Legal Assistance Assoc. 203-946-4811 Ext 148 (Sheldon Toubman)



## Patsy Takemoto Mink Education Foundation for Low-Income Women and Children

Patsy Takemoto Mink (1927-2002) served in the US Congress from 1965-1976 and again from 1990-2002. She represented Hawaii's 2nd Congressional District. The first woman of color elected to the US House of Representatives, she worked tirelessly for civil rights, women's rights, economic justice, civil liberties, peace, and the integrity of the democratic process. Established in 2003, the Patsy Takemoto Mink Education Foundation aims to carry on some of Congresswoman Mink's most ardent commitments: educational access, support, and opportunity for low-income women, especially mothers; and educational enrichment for children.

The Patsy Takemoto Mink Education Foundation for Low-Income Women and Children is accepting applications for Education Support Awards (up to \$2000 each) and for Small Grants (up to \$500 each). Education Support Award applications are due August 1, 2003. Small Grant applications may be submitted at any time and will be reviewed on the 1st and 15th of each month beginning in September 2003. For more information or to print an application please go to the website at [www.ptmfoundation.net/home.shtml](http://www.ptmfoundation.net/home.shtml).

To contribute to the Patsy Takemoto Mink Education Foundation for Low-Income Women and Children send contributions to the Patsy Takemoto Mink Education Foundation PO Box 479, Honolulu, Hawaii 96809. For more information contact Gwendolyn Mink at 202-546-9764 or by e-mail at [gmink@ptmfoundation.net](mailto:gmink@ptmfoundation.net)



### Impacts of Welfare Reform on Children & Adolescents

MDRC is pleased to announce its first Web site video presentation. The brief five-minute video describes, in nontechnical English, MDRC's major findings on the impacts that welfare employment programs have on children and adolescents. Featuring graphics that display the studies' key points, Next Generation project director Virginia Knox explains in clear, nontechnical English how a variety of welfare reform approaches affected children's school performance and social adjustment. View this presentation from their website: [http://www.mdrc.org/announcement\\_hp\\_25.html](http://www.mdrc.org/announcement_hp_25.html)



## State Budget

As of the time this was written (July 17), a final state budget had not been adopted. The new state fiscal year began on July 1 without an approved budget. In 1991, the last time this happened, the legislature adopted and the Governor signed a continuing resolution to authorize continued spending on key programs. This year, the legislature adopted a continuing resolution but the Governor vetoed the resolution and is now authorizing spending through weekly executive orders.

Under this system, the Governor has assumed the power to select what bills get paid by the state on a weekly basis. Because decisions are being made within the Governor's office, it is unclear from week to week what services are being funded.

It is clear that:

**- State-funded benefit programs for legal immigrants are closed to new applicants as of June 30.** Most recent legal immigrants (people who entered the country within the past five years) are barred from applying for cash assistance through the TFA and SAGA programs, for medical assistance through SAGA, HUSKY and other state-funded medical programs, including home health care assistance, and for the state-funded food stamp program. The programs have closed to new applicants; people who were receiving assistance prior to June 30 will not be cut off the program.

**- The Safety Net Program is no longer funded.** The Department of Social Services says that services will be provided "through the United Way on Connecticut-Infoline. Services are provided in the form of outreach to clients previously served by the family service agencies to make them aware of available community resources to meet their family's needs."

We are trying to document the impact of the state funding crisis. If you are not getting needed state services or are aware of the impact of lack of state funding on services, you should do two things:

1. Contact Deborah Noble of CABHN (860-278-5688 ext. 12) with details about the problems.

2. Call the toll-free number set up by legislative Democrats to inform them of the problems: 1-800- 521-7826 or 1-866-290-0828.

Budget negotiations continue among Democratic and Republican legislative leaders and the Governor. ❖

## New Legislation Restricts Hospital Bill Collection

The General Assembly has adopted legislation, effective October 1, that will limit the actions which hospitals can take to collect bills from uninsured patients.

Public Act 03-266, whose lead sponsors were Sens. Martin Looney and Toni Harp [D-New Haven], was prompted by a report on Yale-New Haven Hospital's debt collection practices. The study, called "Uncharitable Care," was researched and written for the Connecticut Center for a New Economy by Grace Rollins, a research analyst for the New England Health Care Employees Union, District 1199/SEIU; the primary sponsor of the bill in the legislature.

A key provision in the act requires the hospital, or any agent doing bill collection for the hospital (including both collection agencies and lawyers), to suspend collection at any time in the collection process, even after a court judgment has been entered, that it discovers that the patient is eligible for free or reduced price care. The account must be referred back to the hospital for immediate review.

The act also prohibits hospitals from referring an account to a collection agency or lawyer without first determining that the patient is not eligible for hospital bed funds. It requires that notice to patients about hospital bed funds be in Spanish as well as in English and that information about such funds be included in all collection notices. In addition, it limits interest on unpaid hospital bills to 5% per year (the statutory

(See Collections, pg. 4)

## TANF Reauthorization Update

On June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003, Congress approved an extension of the current TANF law and funding through September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Transitional Medical Assistance was included in this extension.

Earlier this year, the House of Representatives passed a TANF Reauthorization bill, HR 4, which incorporated most of the Bush administration's proposals. The next step is for the Senate Finance Committee to adopt a bill and send it to the floor of the Senate for discussion. Early in July, Sen. Chuck Grassley, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, released his TANF proposal. Sen. Grassley's proposal, called "PRIDE" (Personal Responsibility and Individual Development for Everyone), includes most of the Bush Administration's priorities and closely mirrors the bill passed by the House.

The Grassley proposal includes:

- \* An increase in the number of hours required to be spent in core work activities from 20 to 24 hours per week;
- \* A very small increase in funding for child care assistance;
- \* Elimination of the lower required work hours for parents of children under age six;
- \* Strict limits on the amount of time devoted to removing barriers to employment that can count as work;
- \* Funding for marriage promotion and abstinence only programs.

In addition, several key provisions are not included in the proposal:

- \* Transitional Medical Assistance for families leaving welfare is eliminated.
- \* There are no new provisions for education and training, including post secondary education.

(See TANF, pg. 4)

## **Collections** (cont. from pg.3)

rate is 10% for other debts), protects \$125,000 in equity in home against hospital debts (the homestead exemption for other kinds of debts is only \$75,000), and prohibits the use of property executions to collect unpaid hospital bills unless the patient has failed to comply with an installment payment order.

It is likely that any low-income uninsured person being sued or threatened with suit for an unpaid hospital bill is eligible for either free or reduced price services. Any agency working with a person in such a situation should immediately contact the debt collector and the hospital and insist that the hospital conduct an immediate eligibility review of the debtor. ♦

## **TANF** (cont. from pg. 3)

\* States are still barred from using federal funds for benefits for recent legal immigrants

It is not clear how much support this proposal has among either Republican or Democratic Senators.

To find out more about the progress of TANF Reauthorization please contact Deborah Noble, CABHN at 860-278-5688 x 12 or DNoble@LARCC.org ♦

## **“Once Upon A Time... Welfare Made A Difference”**

This captivating 28 minute video features four women from across the United States who share their dramatic stories of how welfare served as a lifeline for their families. The film includes an introduction by Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-6th Dist. CA), a former welfare recipient and current chair of the Democratic Caucus Task Force on Children.

CABHN representatives are available to show the Welfare Made A Difference video and discuss welfare reform issues at your meetings. Contact Deborah Noble (860-278-5688 ext. 12) to make arrangements. A companion report, “The Impact of Welfare Reform in CT”, prepared by LARCC, is available on [www.larcc.org](http://www.larcc.org). ♦

**Legal Assistance Resource Center of CT and CABHN** (Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs)  
80 Jefferson Street  
Hartford, CT 06106

## **CABHN Meetings** **held 1st Friday of the month**

**9:30AM - 11:30**

**Upcoming**  
**August 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**September 5th**

Community Renewal Team  
(CRT)

555 Windsor St., Hartford

*Topics:*

Budget Update  
TANF Reauthorization

**And 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.*

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