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# CABHN FEVER

## Employment Law for Nurse's Aids

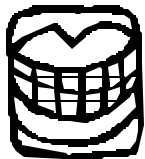
*Q.Help! I'm a nurse's aid/CNA and I just got fired. They accused me of abusing patients. What can I do?*

**A.** Call Statewide Legal Services or see a private lawyer. You may be in danger of losing your nursing license/certification--even if you work well with your supervisor. You'll get a notice from the Department of Public Health (DPH) about a Compliance Conference before your license is taken away. **It is very important for you to attend this conference.**

*(continued...see Nurse on p. 2)*

## Teen Able to Get Braces With Help of Advocate

An advocate from CT Legal Services recently represented a teenager who was denied coverage for orthodontic braces. The Medicaid HMO used an illegal rule to deny the coverage. The advocate was able to get the illegal decision reversed and the HMO was ordered to provide braces for this teen.



Unfortunately, very few denials of this type are ever appealed. The law says that **if there is a medical need, all medical services** for those under age 21 who are on Medicaid (Title 19 or HUSKY A) **must be provided.** Orthodontia (braces, etc.) is considered a medical service.

Parents of children who have been denied ANY kind of medical treatment are encouraged to appeal the denial. So, if your HMO has denied coverage of your child's braces, call advocates Randi Mezzy (1-800-413-7797), Amy Marx (203-348-9216) or Sheldon Toubman (203-946-4811). There is no fee for representation.❖

## Free Summer Lunch for Kids

The Summer Food Program offers free lunches during the summer to kids ages 18 and under (or up to 21 if the person has a disability). There are no income or asset limits, and there are no town residency requirements either.

Pre-registration is not necessary. Even toddlers can go if their caregivers are there to cut the food up for them! Some sites offer breakfast AND lunch, and many are located at recreation centers and schools so the kids also have a chance to play or be involved in a program at the same time.

Most sites start serving meals early July. To find a site near you, call Infoline by dialing 2-1-1. Infoline is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

## Unemployment Comp. Extensions

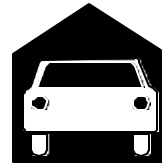
In the April 2002 issue of CABHN Fever we told you about a program extending unemployment (UC) benefits. The program, Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation (TEUC) will extend benefits for 13 weeks. Here's an update on who can get this extension:

- If you used up your 26 weeks of UC benefits on or after 3/15/01 **OR**
- your benefit year\* ended on or after 3/15/01 **AND**
- you are totally or partially unemployed.

To find out, call the Department of Labor (DOL) TEUC unit at 1-866-383-5146 or call your local DOL office. Remember, call to see if you qualify -- you don't have to wait to be sent a notice. (\*A benefit year is the 52 week period in which you could have collected UC benefits).❖

## Attention All Car Owners

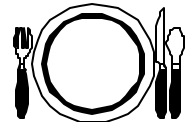
As of July 1, 2002 you can own a car worth up to \$9,500\* and still get food stamps. If you have been turned away from the Food Stamp Program in the past because of how much your car is worth, then NOW is the time to re-apply.



For more information, call End Hunger CT 860-296-1127 or Infoline at 211. If you believe you have been unfairly denied Food Stamps, call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320.

\*\$4,650 before July 1, 2002; based on Kelley Blue Book values.❖

## Who Can Get Food Stamps?



If your monthly household income fits into the chart below, apply for Food Stamps today.

Family Size	Gross Income
1	\$931
2	\$1,258
3	\$1,585
4	\$1,913
5	\$2,240
6	\$2,567
7	\$2,894
8	\$3,221
each add'l	+328

The Department of Social Services (DSS) takes food stamp applications. Call Infoline at 2-1-1 or End Hunger CT! at 860-296-1127 for more information or to find out where you can apply.

When you apply, you'll need to bring a photo I.D., Social Security numbers, pay stubs, rent receipt, copy of SSI award letter (if applicable) and last bank statement.❖

## Rent & Security Deposit Assistance

*A Little Good News and a Lot of Bad News*

At long last, the Department of Social Services has begun issuing Section 8 vouchers and RAP certificates. As this article goes to print, however, the Governor has put a hold on lease-up of most new RAP certificates and the General Assembly has cut the DSS housing budget in a way which will probably result in the loss of about 300 or more authorized RAP certificates.

DSS opened its Section 8 and RAP waiting lists in November, resulting in unduplicated applications from more than 33,000 families. As of late May, however, no vouchers or certificates had actually been given out. At the time, there were about 1,000 Section 8 vouchers and 400 RAP certificates authorized but unused and therefore potentially available for distribution to tenants.

**Section 8.** The Governor's hold on RAP applications does not affect the state's Section 8 program, which is 100% federally funded. DSS expects to issue about 100 new Section 8 vouchers per week through the summer and early fall to families on the waiting list. That is the principal good news.

**RAP.** In contrast, the lease-up of RAP certificates appears to be one of the casualties of the state's budget deficit. Since mid-June, new admissions to the RAP program have been on hold. Waiting list families who had already received an award letter for a new RAP certificate will be allowed to proceed with their application only if their initial briefing was held before July 1. All other new applications are frozen.

Worse than the freeze, however, are the budget adjustments finally approved by the legislature at the end of June. They cut almost \$2 million from DSS's housing and homelessness programs. It is believed that all or nearly all of this cut will be taken from the RAP program, in effect slicing program authorization by about 300 RAP certificates and thereby eliminating nearly all of the remaining new RAP certificates.

There are also fears that more cuts may be coming. The Governor already had authority to cut program budgets by 5%. The legislature has now given the Governor authority to cut budgets by another \$35 million. In addition, the Governor has wide-ranging power to "lapse" funds by simply not spending them; and the budget assumes that about \$175 million in budgeted funds will not be spent. Social services programs, and especially RAP, could easily become targets for these additional cuts.

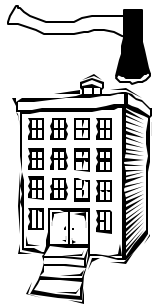
### Security Deposit Guarantee

**Program.** Public Act 02-79, which was adopted by the 2002 General Assembly, liberalized eligibility for Security Deposit Guarantee Program (SDGP) by allowing DSS to give security deposit guarantees to tenants on Section 8 or RAP. The program rules previously required that a family be homeless or in the eviction

process. This should make it easier for tenants with rent subsidies to find apartments. As of July 1, however, the issuance of new security deposit guarantees was also frozen. It is hoped that passage of the budget adjustment act will result in this hold being lifted soon.

**T-RAP (Transitory Rental Assistance Program).** T-RAP, which provides a one-year RAP certificate to certain working families leaving TFA, was also put on hold by the Governor; but it is expected that intake will resume soon and that a small program expansion may even be possible. The final budget adjustments funded T-RAP at about \$1.3 million. We believe that about \$300,000 of that amount is intended to expand T-RAP to reach some working families leaving TFA because of time limits. This wider eligibility, however, requires the legislature to modify the T-RAP statute, which we hope will happen this summer.

**What can you do?** Call the Governor's office (566-4840 or 1-800-406-1527) and say that you oppose any more cuts to housing programs.



## Voter Education & Registration Workshops

Join us to learn about the new CT and National laws and how they apply to nonprofit providers. You'll hear about the role you can take in registration and transportation, how to conduct voter registration drives, and more. *Schedule:*

- July 24, 9:30am, Hartford at CRT
- July 30, 10 am, New Britain\*
- August 1, 10 am, New Haven\*
- August 6, 2002 10:30 am New London\*
- August 8, 10:30 am, Bridgeport\*

\*site to be announced

**Who should attend?** Volunteers and staff of non-profit service providers; community, labor and faith-based organizations, etc.

For information and to confirm attendance, contact Americo Santiago at DemocracyWorks at 860-727-1157 or [americos@attbi.com](mailto:americos@attbi.com). Sponsored by One CT, CT Partnership for Voter Education & Participation, CT Voting Rights Restoration Coalition in cooperation with The Secretary of the State's Office. ♦

## Old Cell Phones Wanted

Many women who go to domestic violence shelters for help are still at risk of being attacked by their abuser despite protective orders. You can help by donating your old cell phone.

The Domestic Violence Programs work with phone companies to reprogram the phone to dial '911' at no charge. An emergency cell phone lets victims get immediate help while allowing them a feeling of security during a terrifying period in their lives.

Call Infoline at 211 to find your local shelter or call Emily Benfer (New Haven Legal Assist.) at 203-946-4811 x 165. ♦

## Nursing License (con't from p. 1)

It will be your first chance to prove that the charges made by your employer are false. And, the conference may be when you are able to reach a solution.

Call Statewide Legal Services for free advice and information at 1-800-453-3320 or (860) 344-0380. ♦



## TANF Reauthorization

The Senate Finance Committee passed its version of the federal welfare (TANF Reauthorization) bill on June 26. The vote in the full Senate may be delayed until September, leaving little time for conference committee work and final action before the TANF block grant ends on September 30. The President has indicated that he believes it would be better to pass an extension of the current program than to adopt a proposal that did not include key provisions in his proposal. The Senate Finance Committee bill differs significantly from--and improves on--the House bill, which generally reflects the President's proposal:

**Work Requirements:** The Senate bill maintains the requirement that recipients work 30 hours per week. The House bill increases the work requirements to 40 hours per week. The Senate bill replaces the existing "caseload reduction credit" with an "enhanced employment credit" which could provide incentives to states to help recipients get good jobs.

**Education & Training:** The Senate bill increases the amount of time low-income parents can pursue education and training (from 12 to 24 months) and increases the number of recipients who can engage in education and training. The Senate bill allows welfare parents to pursue post-secondary education and allows states to count a broader range of activities towards the work requirements. The House proposal limits education and training in the first 24 hours of the work week to four months in a 24-month period.

**Immigrants:** The Senate bill allows states to restore TANF benefits to immigrants. It also restores Medicaid benefits to pregnant women and children who are legal immigrants. The House bill maintains the five-year bar on using federal funds for benefits for immigrants who enter the country after August, 1996.

**Improving Child Well-Being:** The Senate bill allocates \$30 million annually to support At Home Infant Care; allows states to exempt parents with children or other family members with disabilities



## State Budget Passes & Signed Into Law

On July 1, Gov. Rowland signed into law a \$13.2 billion adjustment to the biennial budget. The budget contained significant cuts to municipal aid and human services and some tax increases. It also gave the Governor power to cut an additional \$35 million from appropriations--beyond the 5% recisions he normally can make without prior legislative approval. There is general agreement that further changes will be made to this budget, probably in the fall.

The corporate tax increases included many proposed in the One Connecticut Fair Share Budget proposals. But Governor Rowland continued to vow to veto an income tax surcharge on incomes over \$1 million, so that was not included in the revised budget.

The budget implementer bills that contain the specifics of how cuts are to be implemented will not be completed until later in the summer. However, some of the important provisions in the budget are outlined below:

### Cuts in services:

In a surprise move, \$11 million was cut from Medicaid services. Apparently, the plan is to eliminate non-emergency transportation, podiatry and naturopathic and chiropractic services for adult Medicaid recipients (including parents and elderly or disabled people). This change, which was not debated by legislative committees, will cause severe hardship to poor people in need of medical care and appears to violate federal Medicaid provisions.

from the work requirements and requires states review parents' Individual Responsibility Plans before imposing sanctions.

**Supporting Low-Wage Workers:** The Senate bill renews Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA) for five years; allocates \$200 million annually for wage paying transitional jobs and for initiatives to help low-wage workers advance in the

*Continued, see TANF, p. 4*

**There is still time to stop implementation** of this proposal, which must be adopted as part of the budget implementer bills. **Contact the Governor, Sen. Kevin Sullivan, Rep. Moira Lyons and your own senator and representative to voice opposition!**

- ✍ Home health services eliminated from the services provided to recipients of SAGA medical assistance. (Emergency medical transportation, eliminated last session, was not restored.)
- ✍ Hunger outreach services eliminated - \$227,016 cut.
- ✍ Significant cuts to HUSKY outreach services (although \$1.5 million for the Children's Health Council and about the same amount for Healthy Start were preserved).
- ✍ Housing cut--see article page 2.
- ✍ Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services budget cut by about \$20 million.

### Services preserved:

- ✓ Benefit programs for legal immigrants open to new applicants - \$1.2 million.
- ✓ Eligibility for HUSKY medical assistance for parents with incomes between 100 and 150% of the federal poverty level with no copays or premiums. However, there was no expansion of the program.
- ✓ State Supplement COLA (cost of living adjustment) - \$1 million.
- ✓ Increased nursing home staffing - \$2 million (down from \$7 million).
- ✓ School Readiness Program - \$200,000
- ✓ Covenant to Care - \$200,000.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Your voice needs to be heard. Call your legislators and governor. Tell them that cuts to Medicaid services will cause severe hardship to poor people in need of medical care.

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

## Pulling Apart in CT



In a report issued by CT Voices for Children, "Pulling Apart in CT," we find more confirmation about the gap in income gain between those at the top and those at the bottom of our income distribution. Hartford county had the largest inflation adjusted income decline in all six New England states keeping its distinction as the poorest place in Connecticut with a 31% poverty rate.

While the inflation-adjusted incomes of all CT families increased by about a third during the 1980s, that is not true of the 1990s. During the '90s, the top inflation adjusted incomes of CT families in the top 20% rose again, the middle 20% stayed about the same, but the bottom 40% fell. The average inflation adjusted income of the *top 20%* of CT families in the late '90s was \$181,194. while the *bottom 20%* was \$19,351.

*The CT report and a fact sheet are online at [www.ctkidslink.org](http://www.ctkidslink.org). Taken from CT Voices Enotes.*

## TANF Reauthorization *(con't from p. 3)*

workforce; and ensures that the minimum wage applies to workfare workers and that existing workers are not displaced by workfare workers. The House bill reauthorizes TMA for only one year.

Senators Dodd and Lieberman and Representative Nancy Johnson continue to play key roles in this debate. **Contact them on issues of concern to you.** CABHN will be sending out e-mail updates on TANF reauthorization issues. Contact Deborah Noble ([dnoble@larcc.org](mailto:dnoble@larcc.org)) to be included on this list; updates are also on LARCC's web site: [www.larcc.org](http://www.larcc.org) .❖

## Greater Hartford Legal Aid Has Moved

Greater Hartford Legal Assistance, Inc. has a new name and address: Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc., 999 Asylum Street, 3rd Floor, Hartford, CT 06105-2465. The AIDS Legal Network and our fund raising arm, the Capital Area Foundation for Equal Justice, have moved with us. Phone number (860-541-5000) fax, and email stay the same.❖

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

**CABHN Meetings**  
**held 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month**

**10 - Noon**

**Friday, July 12<sup>th</sup>**

Community Renewal Team  
555 Windsor St., Hartford

**No August meeting**

**Friday September 13<sup>th</sup>**

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.*

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