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CABHN FEVER



What About That Federal Rebate Check?

In early March, the Internal Revenue Service will send notices informing more than 130 million households that they may be eligible for an economic stimulus payment (Rebate Check). In order to qualify for this payment, taxpayers must file a 2007 tax return.

File taxes in 2007 even if you do not need to file and do not expect a refund. The law stipulates that the rebate check may not to be considered in any federal benefits eligibility test.

Starting in May, millions of households will be receiving checks or deposits into their bank accounts of \$300, \$600, \$1,200 or more. In most cases, the IRS will distribute the funds to the same address or account number that tax refunds were sent. So, people who file their taxes early and electronically will receive the payments sooner. If a split refund form (Form 8888) is used, the stimulus payment will be sent in

check form only. Filers who received Refund Anticipation Loans will also receive their payments via check. This is a good reason to open a bank account and have both refund and rebate direct deposited.

Remember, the first transfer of payments will be made to filers who received a refund via direct deposit.

If a filer owes money or expects no refund, the payment can still be provided via direct deposit as long as the filer includes a routing number and account number on their tax return.

\$300 - \$1,200 Payments to Eligible Recipients

Individuals earning less than \$75,000 annually will receive a check for up to \$600. Couples earning less than \$150,000 annually will receive up to \$1,200. Families will also receive \$300 for each child younger than 17.

To find out more about the rebates, go to www.irs.gov and don't forget, if your adjusted gross income was \$54,000 or less in 2007, use Free File to prepare and e-file your taxes online. Find it on www.irs.gov.

Free Diapers Available



The Diaper Bank, formerly the New Haven Diaper Bank, is a private, non-profit organization that distributes free diapers to low-income residents via social service, religious organizations, and community agencies.

Recently, the Diaper Bank has received a contract from the Prevention Services Department of the State Department of Children and Families (DCF) to distribute diapers to a small number of agencies in Hartford and Bridgeport. To find a calendar of distribution points, to volunteer or to donate, please go to www.diaperbank.org, or call 203-934-7009. You may also email information@thediaperbank.org.

CT Pardon Team Offers Forums

Attend a CT Pardon Team Forum, and you'll get the essential, practical information needed to start and complete the pardon application process on your own. You'll get a look at the pardon process from someone who's been through it and be provided with the Board of Pardon & Parole's complete application, along with step-by-step instructions on how to complete and submit an application. For info on upcoming events, go to www.connecticutpardonteam.com or call toll-free: 1-866-251-3810.

Reminder:

Free Dental Services April 12th & 13th

The Connecticut Foundation for Dental Outreach is proud to introduce the Connecticut Mission of Mercy (CTMOM). CTMOM will be a large scale, multi-chair dental clinic held in Tolland this year. Dental services will be provided to anyone (children, adults, and the elderly) who is without dental insurance and in a low income situation. CTMOM is absolutely FREE!

The clinic will be staffed by volunteer dentists, UConn dental students, dental hygienists and dental assistants. They will provide screenings and treatment based on most urgent dental needs, including cleanings, fillings and extractions - all at no cost!

This event will be held at the former Tolland High School, (formerly, 1 Eagle Hill Drive, now 1 Falcon Way off Old Cathole Rd. - there will be signs) Tolland on Saturday April 12, 2008 from 5am to 5pm and Sunday, April 13 from 5am to Noon. Get there early - people travel from all over to be seen! For more information, go to <http://www.csda.com/ctmom/ctmom1.html>

Need Help with Hospital Bills?

If you have hospital debt and need help paying the bills, call the Consumer Health Action Network at 1-888-873-4585 to find out what programs are available to you.

Financial assistance programs are different at every hospital and the Consumer Health Network has put together a list of the financial aid policies for most hospitals in Connecticut and will even help you apply. Call toll free with any questions.



1 in 100 American Adults Behind Bars

A report recently released by the Pew Center on the States revealed a staggering reality impacting America’s families and communities: one out of every one hundred adults is incarcerated.

The report suggests that this disturbing rate of growth among the prison population is not due to an increase in crime or a corresponding growth in the overall population nationwide; rather, the growing rate of incarceration is the result of policy decisions aiming to send more lawbreakers to prison and to keep them incarcerated longer. Additionally, the report also highlights disturbing national trends in recidivism, indicating “more than half of released offenders are back in prison within three years, either for a new crime or for violating the terms of their release.” (Pew Center on the States, 2008)

Connecticut is no exception to these trends. First, Connecticut incarcerates more people than ever before. Despite data in recent years indicating a decline in incarceration rates across the state, the report—as well as the most recent data provided by the CT Department of Correction—suggests that the beginning of 2008 saw record incarceration levels in the state. The DOC lists a total of 19,438 inmates as of January 1, 2008. Of these, 18,144 were men, while 1,294 were women. In addition, only 15,001 of the total inmates in Connecticut had been sentenced as of Jan. 1, 2008, leaving over 4,000 people behind bars, but not convicted.

Second, Connecticut also sees a significant number of people return to prison on technical violations—actions that violate the conditions of an inmate’s release. It is important to note that the top reason for incarceration in the state of Connecticut is “Violation of Probation or Conditional Discharge” (CT DOC, 2008), with 2,299 of the sentenced population currently behind bars for this reason.

The record number of people incarcerated in Connecticut and the increased spending required to build and maintain correctional facilities have multiple implications for Connecticut’s communities. The state often invests more dollars in Corrections than it does in other areas that could foster economic growth and positive community development. For example, for every dollar spent on Higher Education in Connecticut, the state spends \$1.03 on Corrections. Twenty years ago, the state spent only \$.35 on Corrections for every \$1.00 spent on Higher Education. In fact, Corrections now accounts for 4.4% of the state’s general fund and Corrections employees account for 12.6% of State employees. Though Governor Rell has called for increased funding to be allocated for diversion and offender re-entry programs in her proposed budget, emphasizing the need

In Connecticut

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for reforms focused on effective parole supervision, the state continues to spend \$661 million on Corrections alone.

Finally, in addition to highlighting the high quantity of adults who are incarcerated and the increased funding required to house these inmates, the Pew Study also reveals significant disparities in incarceration rates nationwide among both men and women.

Although the Pew Report reveals disturbing trends in our nation’s response to criminal behavior, it also raises awareness of this growing challenge and the need to think comprehensively about prevention, punishment, and re-entry.

References

CT Department of Corrections. www.ct.gov/doc. Jan. 1, 2008.
Melone, Katie. “1 in 100 Adults in Jail.” Hartford Courant. Feb. 29, 2008.
Pew Center on the States. “One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008.” Feb. 28, 2008.

Incarceration Rates/Ratios:	
Men Ages 18 + Yrs.:	Women Ages 35-39 Yrs.:
1 in 54 of all men	1 in 265 of all women
1 in 106 white men	1 in 355 white women
1 in 15 black men	1 in 297 Latina women
1 in 36 Latino men	1 in 100 black women
Men Ages 20-34 yrs:	
1 in 30 of all men	
1 in 9 black men	

The Latino Policy Institute

The Hispanic Health Council (HHC) has served Latino communities across the state of Connecticut through community-based research, culturally and linguistically tailored direct service programs, and policy advocacy for over 30 years. The Council has developed a model for integrating these approaches in order to achieve systemic change. In 2006-07, the Hispanic Health Council formalized its policy advocacy work by officially launching a Latino Policy Institute (the Institute).

The Institute published a Profile of Latino Health in Connecticut to provide evidence of pervasive health inequities experienced by Latinos in Connecticut. This publication clearly demonstrates an enormous problem reflective of systemic root causes that must be addressed through decisive policy changes.

Critical Goals:

The Hispanic Health Council hopes that the Institute will provide

(Cont. on page 3)

HUSKY - Time to Slow Down and Study!

HUSKY A provides health care coverage for about 300,000 children and their parents or caretakers and costs about \$750 million a year. To be eligible, a family's income must be at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. Half the costs of HUSKY A are paid by the federal Medicaid program.

HUSKY B provides health care coverage to about 16,000 children (no adults are covered in HUSKY B) whose families are above the income limit for HUSKY A but still struggle to access health coverage for their children. Much of the funding for HUSKY B comes from federal SCHIP funds.

These important programs have been undergoing major changes over the past two years. The Managed Care Organizations which administer HUSKY are no longer responsible for delivery of important parts of the health care program, including behavioral health services, pharmacy services and,

soon, dental services. Since January, the state contracts between the MCOs (Well Care, CHNCT, Anthem and Health Net) have been changed so that all medical and policy decisions are made by the Department of Social Services. The MCOs are now only responsible for administrative services to members.

On April 1, two MCOs (Well Care and Health Net) will stop contracting with the state to provide HUSKY services. HUSKY participants will have to choose from the remaining MCOs and DSS as the organization that administers their health care program.

Three months later, on July 1, other MCOs are scheduled to enter into new contracts with the state to provide HUSKY health care. Under these contracts, the MCOs will go back to making medical and policy decisions for their members. All HUSKY participants will again have to choose a new MCO - for the second time in four months.

(See HUSKY page 4)

The Latino Policy Institute (Cont. from p.2)

a consolidated strategic approach to achieving these solutions. The Institute is committed to a long-term effort to achieve four critical goals:

- Conduct policy analysis that highlights problems and solutions related to Latino health disparities and the political, social and economic factors that contribute to these disparities

- Create and sustain an active coalition of leaders who work in organizations that touch Connecticut Latino communities

- Form a unified Latino voice that articulates a policy agenda

- Advocate for and implement the policy agenda to affect public policy changes that improve political, social and economic conditions to create healthier communities

Thanks to the Institute's efforts last year, the legislature included public funding as part of the state Medicaid program to cover the cost

of face-to-face medical interpretation for Medicaid patients with limited English proficiency. Unfortunately, Governor Rell's budget for Fiscal Year 2009 eliminates this allocation, and the mandate that it be a covered service. The Latino Policy Institute, led by the Hispanic Health Council, is working again this year to ensure the Connecticut Legislature reinstates the \$4.7 million previously allocated.

As it moves forward, the Institute will address other critical issues of the widening health disparities experienced by Latinos in the state. By bringing together community members, government, business, health care institutions, community providers and researchers, the Institute will work to develop a common understanding of the issues and identify collaborative ways to address them.

Submitted by Jeannette de Jesus, President, Hispanic Health Council

Approps Committee Deadline for Action on Proposed State Budget: April 1

In the next three weeks, the Appropriations Committee will be making decisions about what is included in the 2008-09 state budget. Now is the time to contact your legislators about items that you think should be included in the budget. Call Your Legislator!

House Dems 1-800-842-1902

House Reps 1-800-842-1423

Senate Dems 1-800-842-1420

Senate Reps 1-800-842-1421

Gov's Office 1-800-406-1527

Human Services Committee Sends State EITC Bill to Finance

Dozens testified in support of a State Earned Income Tax Credit (S.B. 163 An Act Concerning a State Earned Income Tax Credit) at a public hearing before the Human Services Committee on February 21. A diverse group of people testified, including current and former EITC tax filers, nonprofit organizations operating VITA sites, faith-based groups, labor, and advocates.

The Human Services Committee voted 13-5 in support of SB 163 – and referred it to the Finance, Bonding and Revenue Committee. One Republican, Sen. John Kissel, ranking member of the committee, voted in favor of the state EITC.

The Human Services Committee Joint Favorable Report is now posted on the Connecticut General Assembly website. See the Joint Favorable Report and State EITC testimony at: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2008/JFR/S/2008SB-00163-R00HS-JFR.htm>

Please call your legislators and urge them to support passage of a state EITC in the 2008 session.

2008 Escúchenos Conference

This year's Escúchenos Conference will be held on April 11th at the UConn School of Social Work.

The ESCUCHENOS Conference was instituted in 2000 as an effort to address the needs of Latino and Latina youth in the care of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The committee that runs the conference is made up of The University of Connecticut, School for Social Work, DCF and non-profit community based agencies. The conference itself has a non-traditional and unique format in which Latino/a youth have major participation while the adult audience focuses on listening to the issues and needs they raise. For that reason we call it Escúchenos, which in English means: Listen to us. The conference includes activities that celebrate the Latino culture.

This year the focus of the conference will be on youth making connections

with their culture through typical dance, cooking, writing, and illustrating. There will be an emphasis on connecting to one's identity, heritage, culture, and opportunities. The theme this year will be "Connections."

HUSKY (Cont. from p.3)

RB 5618, An Act Concerning Revisions to the HUSKY Plan, would require that this process slow down and that the state conduct a study of the best and most cost-effective way to deliver health care in the HUSKY system. The bill bars DSS from contracting with MCOs to deliver HUSKY health care for a year and requires a study of various systems for delivering health care to HUSKY participants, including primary care case management.

RB 5618 is currently being considered by the Human Services Committee, which will decide whether or not to support this bill by March 18.

CABHN Meetings

Upcoming Meeting

CABHN/FESN Meeting

Friday, April 4

9:30-11:30 am

CRT

555 Windsor Ave.

Hartford, CT

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

We'd like your feedback on CABHN Fever!

We are interested in making CABHN Fever as helpful as possible to our readers. You can help us do that by letting us know what you are most interested in and how we can best meet your needs. Please take a moment to fill out this questionnaire and send, fax or e-mail your responses to us. THANKS!

What issues are you interested in?

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Elder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

What kinds of articles are of most interest to you? (Rate 1-5 with 1 as most interesting.)

- _____ Descriptions of programs that help people
_____ Descriptions of legislative proposals
_____ Summaries of recent studies relating to issues of concern to low-income residents
_____ Reminders about upcoming events
_____ Suggestions about legislative action that I can participate in

How well do you find CABHN Fever addresses issues that are important to you?

(1) Consistently (2) Most of the time (3) Sometimes (4) Not often

Comments?

Are there issues that you think should receive more attention in CABHN Fever? (please specify)

What do you find most helpful to in the CABHN newsletter?

If you receive CABHN Fever electronically, which option would you prefer?:

- ___ (a) current system - receive a PDF version of the paper copy, which I can print out
___ (b) convert to an electronic newsletter with access to links

How do you use CABHN Fever? (check all that apply)

- _____ To gain knowledge/information
_____ To follow issues that are relevant to my life
_____ To follow issues that are relevant to my clients/constituents
_____ To keep up with what's going on at the Legislature
_____ For action updates and suggestions

Other?

Do you have any suggestions on how we can improve CABHN Fever?

(next page)

Are you:

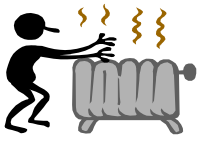
- an advocate
- a policy-maker
- a government worker
- a social service provider
- a teacher
- a resident who uses programs for low-income people

Thank you for your input, we appreciate your response!

Mail to: CABHN
44 Capitol Ave., Suite 301
Hartford, CT 06106

Fax to: (860) 278-2957

Email: ESmall@larcc.org



KEEP YOUR UTILITIES ON!!

ARE YOU FACING A UTILITY SHUTOFF OR A PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT THAT YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO KEEP?

THERE IS HELP FOR YOU

LOCATIONS:

NEW BRITAIN – Saturday, APRIL 12, 2008 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
CONNECTICUT BAR ASSOCIATION – 30 Bank Street
(For customers of CL&P & Connecticut Natural Gas)

NEW LOCATION!!!

WATERBURY – Saturday, APRIL 19, 2008 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
N.O.W. – 232 North Elm Street
(For customers of CL&P & Yankee Gas)

NEW HAVEN – Saturday, April 19, 2008 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Center Church on the Green, 311 Temple Street
(For customers of United Illuminating/Southern Connecticut Gas)

HARTFORD – Saturday, APRIL 26, 2008 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
CRT, 555 Windsor Street
(For customers of CL&P & Connecticut Natural Gas)

BRIDGEPORT- SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2008 9:00-1:00
BRIDGEPORT SOCIAL SERVICES, 752 East Main Street

NEW LONDON – SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2008 From 9:00 – 3:00
OIC of New London County, 106 Truman St.
(for customers of Yankee Gas and CL&P)

STAMFORD – Saturday, May 10, 2008 from 9:00 – 3:00
CTE, 34 Woodland Ave
(for customers of CL&P and Yankee Gas)

MERIDEN - Saturday MAY 17, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Yankee Gas, 56 Cooper Street
(For customers of Yankee Gas and CL&P)

WHO CAN WE HELP?

- Low income customers of utility companies who have some kind of income
You must have enough income to pay both your rent and average monthly utility bills.

NOTE: WE PROVIDE BUDGET COUNSELING, BUT NOT DIRECT CASH ASSISTANCE.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING UTILITY DAY,
PLEASE CALL STATEWIDE LEGAL SERVICES AT 1-800-453-3320**