

Highlights in this issue:	
Keep Children Insured	p 1
Domestic Violence Forums	p 1
Addressing Barriers to Work...	p 2
"Checks" Delivered	p 2
TANF Reauthorization	p 3

CABHN FEVER



Public Forums on Domestic Violence: Come Share Your Thoughts & Experiences

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is sponsoring six forums for domestic violence victims, advocates, law enforcement (and others) to “come share your experiences, thoughts and ideas about programs and services for victims of domestic violence.” This is an initiative of the new division of social work and prevention services within DSS. These meetings are an important opportunity for clients and advocates to share our perspectives with Department representatives. It is not clear how the Department plans to use the information it gathers so it is important that our voices be part of the conversation.

For all forums, there is a session either 3:30 to 5:30 or 6:30 to 8:30 with dinner served between 5:30 and 6:30. **There is no fee or reservation required.** For more information, call DSS at 860-424-5668. Here are the dates and places:

- **Bridgeport** - June 13. Bridgeport Holiday Inn, 1070 Main St. 203-334-1234.
- **Hartford** - June 4. Hartford Crowne Plaza Hotel 50 Morgan St. 860-549-2400
- **New Haven** - June 5. Omni New Haven Hotel, 155 Temple St. 203-772-6664
- **Norwich** - June 6. Ramada Inn, 10 Laura Blvd., 860-889-5201.
- **Torrington** - June 12. Cornucopia Banquet Hall, 371 Pinewoods Rd. 860-489-5446.
- **Waterbury** - June 11. The Courtyard by Marriott, 63 Grand St. 203-596-1000.❖

Guide to Behavioral Health Services Available

The CT Women’s Consortium has just updated their *Advocacy Guide to Behavioral Health Services for Women in Connecticut’s Medicaid Managed Care Program*. This guide is a valuable resource to case managers, providers, and women involved in the Medicaid Managed Care Program. It outlines the steps to follow to access drug and alcohol treatment or mental health services. It also lists a woman’s options if she is unhappy with the approved treatment plan. This tool will then help navigate the ever-changing and complex health maintenance plans and their sub-contractors by providing the number of unauthorized visits, the preferred referral procedure and the contact information.

For a copy of this guide, contact Heather Campbell, CT Women’s Consortium 203-498-4184 x. 10 or email hcampbell@womensconsortium.org.❖

Support Groups for Families & Friends

When nobody understands...NAMI does. NAMI (*National Alliance for the Mentally Ill*) offers support groups around Connecticut. The groups are for families and friends of people with severe mental illness. Groups meet regularly to offer support and share information gained from hard-earned experience.



NAMI also offers a 12-week *Family-to-Family Education Program* for parents, children, partners, and siblings of people with serious mental illness. Some of the important parts of the course include: how to handle crisis; medications and their side effects; learning about community services and supports; getting better services; fighting stigma. The course is free.

Call NAMI-CT at (800) 215-3021 or (860) 586-2319.❖

Helping Children Keep Health Insurance

Many children will reach the end of their eligibility period for HUSKY, the health care insurance for children. The Department of Social Services is sending out a letter saying to some families that the children’s health care eligibility will stop at the end of June. To keep the children enrolled in HUSKY, it is very important to fill out and return the application right away.

Remember:

- ✓ Families must reapply every year for HUSKY.
- ✓ Even if the family’s income has gone up, children may still be able to get this health care.
- ✓ Depending on income, some parents may also be eligible for HUSKY A. (These parents can apply for themselves using the same application).
- ✓ It’s a good idea to keep children enrolled in HUSKY A if insurance through the employer or its out-of-pocket expenses are too expensive or if changes in jobs would leave the children uninsured.
- ✓ Information is available by calling toll free 1-877-CTHUSKY.❖

Legal Quick Tip

A surprising number of people who apply for Social Security or SSI disability are turned down when they first apply. However, many are given benefits if they appeal. If you are applying for disability benefits, you are encouraged to ask right away for *reconsideration* if you are first turned down. The next step is to ask right away for a *hearing* if you are denied at reconsideration.

For free advice, call *Statewide Legal Services* at 1-800-453-3320.❖

Support Needed for People with Multiple Barriers to Employment

Advocates are increasingly concerned about TFA recipients with multiple barriers who have been characterized as "hard-to-serve". Developing strategies for serving this population has become a national issue and many states have taken steps to implement programs that address the special needs of these clients. Connecticut however, has so far failed to put program components in place which would provide these services. There has been no effort in Connecticut to address the reasons **why** there are individuals who are unable to successfully transition into the workplace.

National studies and Connecticut's own Hard to Serve Collaborative (convened by DSS and DOL and including participation by DMHAS, DCF and the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services) have recognized that the presence of barriers such as physical disabilities, mental health issues, learning disabilities, substance abuse issues, inadequate transportation or child care, domestic violence and a lack of education and job skills, may restrict the amount or type of work that a client can perform or their ability to stay employed.

The Governor's proposal to effectively limit TFA receipt to 33 months will especially impact on those with multiple barriers. Many of these individuals have been playing by the rules and receiving assistance through extensions but have never had their barriers to self-sufficiency identified or addressed. The Appropriations Committee's proposed budget includes \$2 million for TFA supportive employment services for those without a high school education. This allocation is a positive step towards recognizing and addressing the needs of those with multiple barriers such as a lack of education. However, funds may be better spent by developing an intensive case management model that has proven to

(Continued...see Barriers, p. 3)

No Vacation for Hunger

Where do kids go to eat nutritious meals during summer vacation when there is no school breakfast or lunch available? The answer to this question is that many kids go hungry. Only 20% of the children who eat free and reduced price school meals during the school year participate in the summer program. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) offers free food to kids while they are on summer vacation.

Summer nutrition is vital because most children lose their access to regular school lunches and breakfasts. Emergency food sites report requests for food for children go up in the summer. The average daily attendance at CT summer food sites went down by 1,464 kids a day. (28,635 in 1999 to 27,171 in 2000). Yet the number of students who ate free or reduced-price lunches increased.

The SFSP is a federally funded program administered by the State Department of Education. Sponsors such as schools, camps, local government, and nonprofits, operate sites where any child from ages 1 to 17 can eat. Applications for sponsors will be accepted until June 15. For information, contact Charlene Russell-Tucker, Dept. of Education, 860-807-2071, or End Hunger CT! at 860-296-1127.♦

What does your community have to offer kids in need this summer?

Forums on Fatherhood

Come and talk about what it takes these days to be a good dad. What helps and what doesn't? What needs to change? If you don't live with your children, how do you continue to be a good dad? How do agencies help?

- ♦ June 13, Rock Cats Stadium, New Britain, 1 - 5 pm. Call Alejandro Arbaez 860-723-1115.
- ♦ June 14, New London, 5 - 8 pm. Call Pat Anderson 860-823-3390.
- ♦ June 21, Holiday Inn No. Haven, 4 - 6pm. Call Rhonda Evans 974-8379.

These forums are sponsored in part by the Fatherhood Initiative of CT.♦

Join the "Leave No Child Behind®" Campaign

Marian Wright Edelman, President of the Children's Defense Fund, joined Senator Chris Dodd (CT) and Rep. George Miller (CA) to announce The *Leave No Child Behind Act*, a major new legislative initiative for children. The mission of the campaign is to build a nation where families have the support they need to make it at work and at home; where every child enters school ready to learn and leaves on the path to a productive future; where babies are likely to be born healthy and sick children have the health care they need; where no child has to grow up in poverty; where all children are safe and every child has a place to call home.

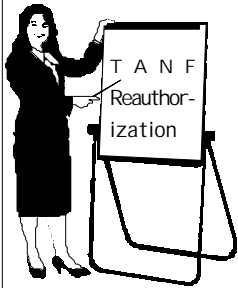
To achieve the mission, the campaign is organizing a strong grassroots movement. There are many opportunities to join the campaign--for example, "Wednesdays in Washington and Back Home" to bring concerned citizens together to talk to legislators about this campaign. For more, call 202-628-8787 or visit www.childrensdefense.org♦

"Checks" Delivered to Governor & Legislature

Spend our state dollars on fighting poverty and meeting the urgent needs of low income people in Connecticut. That's the message delivered recently to the Governor and Legislators by members of the Campaign to Fight Poverty and Build Economic Security.

Campaign members met with groups across the state and collected over 1,200 signed "checks". The checks and a \$601 million "check" (representing the projected surplus) were presented with a list of seven priorities. "There is no question that we have the money," said Frank Perez, Executive Director of the Puerto Rican Forum. "The question is simply one of priorities- we say that basic housing, quality education, health care and good jobs are priorities..."

Thanks to all who signed the checks!



Starting to Look at Reauthorization of TANF

The federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant expires in 2002. In the next year, Congress will be debating important issues related to TANF, including:

■ *Should funding for the TANF block grant remain the same?* People who want to cut the block grant argue that since many states have not used all the funds that have been available to them over the past five years, there is no reason to continue funding at the current level. Connecticut is one of the few states which has consistently spent all of its available TANF funds.

Some people argue that the block grant should be increased to reflect the inflation rate so that the value of the block grant remains the same.

■ *Should states be rewarded for reductions in family poverty?* Currently, there is an incentive to the states to cut the number of families receiving cash assistance, known as the “caseload reduction credit”. Advocates for poor families are exploring the possibility of a new “poverty reduction” credit, which would reward states which can demonstrate that their TANF program has resulted in reduced family poverty, rather than just reduced numbers of families receiving cash assistance.

■ *What activities should be defined as “work”?* The current law contains a fairly narrow definition of what states can count as work when determining how many families meet the federal work participation requirement. There will be discussions of expanding the definition of work to include more education, training, substance abuse and mental health treatment and other activities which address barriers to employment.

■ *Is the five-year time limit on the use of federal funds for cash assistance appropriate?* Because families receiving cash assistance for an extended period of time face many barriers to employment, there will be discussion of whether the five-year time limit is appropriate or whether more families should be exempted from the time-limit based on their circumstances.

■ *Should there be more emphasis on family formation?* One of the stated purposes of the TANF program is to “encourage the formation of two-parent families”. Supporters of the formation of two-parent families argue that states have not taken this purpose seriously and have not devoted resources to this purpose.

While TANF has not been a focus of attention yet in Congress, we can be part of shaping the conversation at the national level by talking to Congresspeople now. CABHN is interested in working with local organizations to set up meetings with Congresspeople over the summer and fall. Please call 860-278-5688 Deborah Noble (ext. 12) or Jane McNichol (ext. 15) if you are interested in working on this. ♦

Women Share Stories with Federal Legislators

On May 16th, Deborah Noble, the CABHN Community Liaison, traveled to Washington, DC, along with over 40 other members of *Welfare Made A Difference* National Campaign. These women, from all across the country, brought their personal stories of welfare to Congress. The Campaign members were seeking to educate Congress on the harmful effects of the 1996 federal welfare law in preparation for the upcoming Congressional debates regarding the re-authorization of TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) in 2002.

Deborah and other Campaign members met with their state’s federal legislators, in addition to speaking with Congressional members of the House Ways & Means, House Education and Workforce, Senate Finance, Education, Health, and Labor and key members of the Black, Progressive, and Women’s Caucuses. Deborah also attended meetings with the Senior Legislative Aides from both Rep. Nancy Johnson’s and Sen. Joseph Lieberman’s offices.

The *Welfare Made A Difference* National Campaign seeks to change public perception and public policy relating to welfare issues through the sharing of personal stories by former and current public assistance recipients in order to illustrate the direct impacts of these policies.

To get more involved with this national effort, call Deborah (860-278-5688 x12) or visit www.wmadcampaign.org. ♦

Be part of the solution...
get involved!

Barriers to Employment (continued from p. 2)

work for the hard-to-serve population in other states. Effective programs incorporate accurate client identification, enhanced case management, service coordination and employment integration. Connecticut already has the networks, tools and infrastructures in place to design and implement a program focused on those with multiple barriers. Let your legislator know the importance of serving those with multiple barriers. For more information, call Sara Parker McKernan at LARCC, (860-278-5688x 11). ♦

Applications Accepted on June 1 for Section 8

The Middletown Section 8 list will be opening on June 1 from 9 am - 11 am. Call 860-346-8671, ext. 114 and ask to get on the list. No applications will be taken in person. ♦



Rebuilding Democracy is a newly forming organization trying to fix our democracy, **so the system works for everyone**. By addressing core problems in our democratic system, we can help create a system that is able to solve the many serious needs of our society.

We will work to strengthen individuals' ability to shape the public policies that affect us all.

We'll work to overcome obstacles to democratic participation by improving: **the educational system**, so that all people can gain the knowledge and skills they need to be effective citizens; **the news media**, so that we all get the information we need about our communities and our world; **campaigns and elections**, so our elected leaders win elections based on their talents and ideas, rather than their ability to raise money.

We need YOUR help. Most of our work can be done by anyone -- with any skills. Call Shelby at 860-233-7543 or email shelby@rebuildingdemocracy.org.

Progressives Offer Monthly Newsletter

Are you interested in keeping informed of what progressive activists in the New Haven area are doing in the fields of peace, social and environmental justice, labor issues, and fair health care? There is a coalition of like-minded groups in the New Haven area called the Progressive Action Roundtable (PAR) that publishes a monthly Newsletter. Our community Newsletter provides a medium to spread word of a group's activities. A 10-issue subscription is \$10 or what you can afford. Sample issues are free. PAR meets the third Saturday of the month (except July & August) at the New Haven Free Public Library from 1-3 pm. Contact: Mary Johnson, 203-387-7858; or jeffry.larson@yale.edu.

CABHN Fever by E-Mail

Here's your chance to get CABHN Fever right away and help us cut postage costs! Just send **both** your email **and** mailing addresses to DNoble@larcc.org. Thanks!

Next CABHN meeting:

Friday, June 8th

10:00 - 12:00

Action for Bridgeport Community Development

1070 Park Ave., Bridgeport
(203) 366-8241

TOPIC: Legislative Wrap Up

Directions: From I-95 No. or So., take exit 27A to Rt. 8/25. Take exit 2 (Golden Hill St). Go left over bridge, take first left on Washington Ave. straight to last building on right (yellow brick). Park behind building or across the street.

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.

Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs

80 Jefferson Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Please Share This Newsletter With Others

If you would like to be on our mailing list, please call (860) 278-5688.