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# CABHN FEVER

## One Final Utility Day in May - Hartford



Are you facing a utility payment that you can't afford? Statewide Legal Services is offering its last Utility Day on May 1<sup>st</sup>, from 9 am to 1 pm at the South Congregational Church, 277 Main Street, Hartford. Legal advocates will be on hand to help you come up with a workable payment plan for both you and your utility company. If you have any questions, please call Bonnie Roswig at SLS, (860) 344-8096 x 3002

## Legal Help for Low Income Immigrants

Greater Hartford Legal Aid (GHLA) provides free legal assistance to low-income immigrants living in Hartford County\*. These services are available to both *undocumented* and *documented* immigrants. GHLA is available to help immigrants with a variety of legal problem areas including: housing, education, government benefits, health care, family problems, domestic violence, AIDS related and elderly issues.

For more information or if you would like someone from GHLA to speak to your community group, agency, or church, please contact Jamey Bell at 860-541-5046 or Angel Feng at 860-541-5001

*\*Hartford County includes: Avon, Bristol, Bloomfield, Burlington, Canton, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Enfield, Farmington, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Hartland, Manchester, Marlborough, Newington, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, South Windsor, Suffield, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor. Plus, for seniors only: Andover, Berlin, Bolton, Columbia, Ellington, Hebron, New Britain, Plainville, Plymouth, Somers, Southington, Stafford, Tolland, Vernon*

## AIDS Legal Network: Protect Your Rights

People living with HIV/AIDS deal with a variety of problems arising from their illness, many of them non-medical related. The AIDS Legal Network (ALN) is there for them to offer legal information, advice, and referral services for people living with HIV/AIDS in Connecticut. ALN has a panel of attorneys throughout Connecticut who are willing and able to help people living with HIV/AIDS free of charge.

If you or someone you know is living with HIV/AIDS, it is possible to attain a better quality of life by taking a pro-active role to ensure that basic rights are protected. ALN can help by providing services in the areas of: discrimination, family law, government benefits, financial and credit issues, confidentiality, and advanced directives. If you are a provider, an agency, or family member/support giver who assists people with HIV/AIDS, ALN is available to provide legal education and technical assistance for you as well. For more information, please contact ALN at 888-380-3646 or e-mail [jcabanhernandez@ghla.org](mailto:jcabanhernandez@ghla.org).

## Health Care Coverage for Some Working Parents Continued Through April, 2005

In February 2003, the legislature passed budget adjustments which eliminated HUSKY A health care coverage for parents in families with income above 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL). In March, 2003, working parents who were facing elimination of their health care coverage, represented by lawyers from Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid and New Haven Legal Assistance Association, sued to maintain coverage for two years under the Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA) program. Health care coverage for these 15,000 families was continued under a court order while the court worked on a decision.

In March, 2004, the federal appeals court issued a decision in favor of the working parents. As a result of this ruling, HUSKY A parents who had earnings and income above 100% of the FPL when eligibility levels were reduced in April of 2003, will remain

(See Health Care Coverage, p.2)



## The Salvation Army - Summer Camp Opportunities for Young & Old

Summer Camp registration for children in the Greater Hartford area for the Salvation Army's Camp CONNRI in Ashford, CT has started! This delightful summer getaway is available to children ages 7 -13 yrs. old and seniors 55 yrs or older raising grandchildren or relative kin. Camp CONNRI offers swimming, hiking, boating, arts and crafts and more.

Camp Sessions are:

August 3<sup>rd</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> Children 7-11 yrs. old and grand families/relatives

July 23<sup>rd</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> Older children ages 12 -13 yrs.

July 5-9 and Aug. 16 - 20 Senior Camp Sessions for adults over 55

Registration & camp fees depend on income. For more information please call 860-543-8413 x 115 or 860-246-3251.

## Protecting the Rights of DSS Clients with Disabilities

In January 2003, the Department of Social Services closed six offices and reduced staff by 150 people. Case workers have seen their caseload increase from 600 to over 1,000 cases, and voicemail systems are consistently filled to the limit.

Both the office closures and subsequent DSS staff layoffs have led to numerous delays and incorrect decisions regarding benefits for people with disabilities.

In January 2003, eight people affected by the DSS office closings, represented by lawyers from the Connecticut Legal Services programs, challenged the office closings. The lawsuit, named Raymond vs. Rowland, alleges that DSS has failed to screen clients for disabilities and is in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the U.S. Constitution. The plaintiffs argue that the federal ADA statute requires DSS to act to identify people with disabilities who need help, and then offer them help, such as redetermination interviews done by phone or home visit, and assistance in gathering medical documents for eligibility verification. In addition, the suit claims that DSS has failed to provide an adequate appeal process for clients who have been denied benefits, a violation of constitutional due process rights.

On March 12, 2004, a U.S. District judge, by granting class certification, recognized that the DSS actions challenged in the lawsuit affect many more people than the eight original plaintiffs and authorized two legal services attorneys to represent the class of people affected. The number affected is in the tens of thousands, given the number of individuals receiving SAGA cash, Aid to the Aged, Blind & Disabled (AABD) and Medicaid benefits based on disability, as well as those receiving TFA exemptions or extensions due to disabling conditions or impairments.

If you are a person with disabilities, or are working with someone with disabilities, who is experiencing problems accessing benefits through DSS, please contact the legal services lawyers representing the class members in this case: Lucy Potter, Maria Morelli-Wolfe or Greg Bass at Greater Hartford Legal Aid (860-541-5000); Joanne Gibau at New Haven Legal Assistance Association (203-946-4811); or, at Connecticut Legal Services, Shirley Bergert (Willimantic, 860-456-1761), Priya Cloutier (New London, 860-447-0323), or Cheryl Kohler (Waterbury, 203-756-8074).



## Supportive Housing Gets Boost in CT

On April 7, 2004 Gov. John G. Rowland signed an executive order which creates an Interagency Council on Supportive Housing and Homelessness. Comprised of officials from his budget office, the commissioners of seven departments and experts from other key agencies, the council must devise a plan by Sept. 1 to develop 1,000 new supportive housing units within three years. Rowland's executive order is a big step toward the Partnership's "Reaching Home" Campaign goal of 10,000 new supportive housing units in the next 10 years. Recognizing that thousands of homeless people were turned away from overcrowded shelters last year and that 33,000 people experienced homelessness, including 13,000 children, Rowland ordered that the council act on many fronts to:

- Recommend necessary capital and operating and service funding.
- Identify means to leverage local, federal, and private investment.
- Smooth the review process for state funding and recommend necessary changes in housing, homelessness and healthcare delivery policies to support the investment in

supportive housing.

·Recommend actions to expand the supply of affordable housing as a way of preventing and responding to homelessness.

For more information about this or to receive the weekly CT Partnership for Strong Communities newsletter go to [www.ctpartnershiphousing.com](http://www.ctpartnershiphousing.com) or call 860-244-0066.

## Health Care Coverage (Cont. from page 1)

eligible for TMA until April 1, 2005. The ruling does not increase the income limit for coverage of parents; this limit remains at 100% of the federal poverty level.

## New HUSKY Income Guidelines

If your household income falls below the following guidelines, you and/or your children may be eligible for HUSKY Healthcare Coverage. Husky A is free health care for children under 19; and pregnant women (note: for eligibility of pregnant women, unborn child is also counted as a family member). (Change effective 4/1/04)

Family size	Annual Income
2	Less than \$23,107
3	\$28,900
4	\$34,873
5	\$40,756
6	\$46,639

### HUSKY A Parents/Caregivers\*

Family size	Annual Income
2	Less than \$12,491
3	\$15,671
4	\$18,851
5	\$22,031
6	\$25,211

*\*Free health care for parents who live with child or for a relative caregiver. \$1.50 co-pay per prescription, and \$2.00 co-pay for medical outpatient services unless: under age 21; or pregnant or up to 60 days after pregnancy; or receiving family planning drugs; or in a nursing facility or chronic disease hospital; or receiving compounded prescription.*



## Appropriations and Finance Committees Pass Spending and Tax Proposals

At the end of March, the two major legislative Committees which put together the state budget proposal, the Appropriations Committee and the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, passed their spending and tax plans. The plans are very different from the budget proposed by the Governor. Legislative leadership is about to begin negotiations on the budget. Highlights of the proposals from these Committees:

### Appropriations:

Restore Medicaid HUSKY A and fee-for-service benefit package and eliminate proposed premiums - cost: \$17.69m

Eliminate \$1.50 prescription and \$2 medical services co-payments under Medicaid - cost: \$14.25m

Eliminate SAGA prescription co-pays (Identifies \$25 million in savings to help pay for this items through including more drugs in the preferred drug list program and extending the preferred drug list to drugs provided under the SAGA program. Use of an expanded preferred drug list means that more drugs would be subject to prior authorization.)

Require that TFA applicants complete an employability plan before being found eligible for cash assistance. Savings: \$1.5 million

Re-open Care4Kids working parents child care subsidy program to about 4,000 families - cost: \$22.7 million

Re-open benefit programs for recent legal immigrants - \$2.5million, including Medicaid - \$1 million; SAGA - \$ .9 million; Temporary Family Assistance - \$ .25 million; CT Home Care Program - \$ .27 million; State Food Stamp Supplement - \$ .1 million

### Other items:

Beyond Shelters Initiative - \$500,000

Homeless Shelters - \$200,000 (additional)

Children's Health Council - \$100,000

The Committee also rejected the Governor's proposals to eliminate non-critical dental care for adults (cost of \$4.7 million) and to impose co-pays for Medicaid non-emergency transportation (cost of \$1.23 million)

### Finance, Revenue and Bonding

The Committee rejected the Governor's proposal to increase taxes on cigarettes and alcohol and, instead, proposed:

Increasing the personal income tax rate to 5.5% for couples with incomes over \$1 million to raise \$127 million

Decoupling from the federal estate tax to continue the Connecticut estate tax and raise \$158 million in the state fiscal year starting in July, 2006.

Contact your legislators to urge support for these tax and spending proposals. See numbers below.

For information on who your local Senator or Representative is go to [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org)

## Take the CT Tax and Budget Quiz



Taken from publication by Connecticut Voices for Children. (Answers at end of quiz)

1. True or False? Millionaires pay a greater share of their income in state and local taxes than others.
2. How much has Connecticut's business tax burden increased in the last three years?
  - a) 25%
  - b) 60%
  - c) It has decreased
3. How much of the average CT taxpayer's state and local tax dollar goes for property taxes?
  - a) 10%
  - b) 40%
  - c) 65%

4. Among all states with a broad based personal income tax, where does CT's top rate rank?

- a) Highest
- b) 38<sup>th</sup> highest
- c) 6<sup>th</sup> lowest

5. Is Connecticut's state and local spending on education as a share of personal income

- a) 50<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation
- b) 50<sup>th</sup> lowest in the nation.

### Answers:

1. False: The poorest 40% of CT taxpayers (those making under \$37,000 annually) paid about 10% of their income in total state and local sales, excise, property and income taxes. The top 1% of CT taxpayers (those making over \$471,000) paid just 4.4% of their income in these taxes.

2. (c) It has decreased. A January 2004 report prepared by Ernst & Young for The Council on State Taxation (a non-profit trade organization with a membership of 550 major corporations engaged in interstate and international business) reports that CT was one of only three states to reduce total business taxes between FY 2000 and FY 2003.

3. (b) 40% of the average CT taxpayer's state and local tax dollar goes for property taxes.

4. (c) CT ranks 6<sup>th</sup> lowest, tied with Alabama and Mississippi.

5. (b) U.S. Census Bureau data on government spending ranks Connecticut 50<sup>th</sup> lowest in the nation on state and local spending for education as a share of personal income.

## Call Your Legislator



- House Democrats 1-800-842-8267
- House Republicans 1-800-842-8270
- Senate Democrats 1-800-842-1420
- Senate Republicans 1-800-842-1421



## **Save the Date: Immigrant Art Exhibit**

Hartford immigrant artists representing various countries will be featured in the exhibit "The Colors of Liberty" on May 17<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> in the LOB Lower Concourse, Capitol Ave. For more information, please contact Anaelisa Vanegas-Farrara or Autumn Fiske at (860) 727-1157

This even is sponsored by the Connecticut Immigrant and Refuge Coalition.

## **Progressive Social Forum in Boston**

The Boston Social Forum will take place July 23-25, 2004 on the campus of UMass Boston, under the general theme of "Another World Is Possible, A Fairer Society Is Necessary".

Over 50 Boston area progressive community, labor, immigrant, religious

and advocacy organizations are participating in the creation of this space for an extended dialogue on what alternative visions progressive movements have to offer the region and the American public in this era of corporate globalization.

The goals of the event are simple: encourage various social movements to exchange information, network with one another, form new alliances, and push our movements forward a bit more towards the next stage of our development.

You can find more information at [www.bostonsocialforum.org](http://www.bostonsocialforum.org) or you can e-mail the BSF Secretary at [info@bostonsocialforum.org](mailto:info@bostonsocialforum.org)

## **Need info on financing a college education?**

Check out these helpful websites:



[www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)  
[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)  
[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)  
[www.ctmentor.org](http://www.ctmentor.org)

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

## **CABHN Meetings held 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month**

**9:30 - 11:30 am**

### **Upcoming Meetings:**

**May 7<sup>nd</sup>**

**June 4<sup>th</sup>**

Community Renewal Team  
(CRT)

555 Windsor St., Hartford

#### *Topics:*

*Medicare Discount Cards  
CT Votes! Initiative- New Voting  
Laws & what agencies can and  
cannot do*

*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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