

CABHN FEVER

Preferred Drug List	p.1
Section 8 Vouchers	p.2
Care 4 Kids	p.2
Federal Budget	p.3



The Renters' Rebate Program for the Elderly & Disabled

The Renters' Rebate Program is a program for Connecticut renters (tenants) who are elderly or totally disabled and whose incomes do not go over certain limits. If you qualify, the Renters' Rebate Program may give you a rebate check. The amount of the rebate check is based on your income, the amount of your rent, and the utility bills that you paid in 2004 (excluding telephone). Rebate amounts can be up to \$900 for married couples and \$700 for single persons.

Are you eligible?

- ✓ If you are over 65 years of age; **or** are the surviving spouse of someone who was eligible at the time of his/her death and over 50 years of age; **or** if you are permanently and totally disabled and 18 years of age or older; **and**
- ✓ have lived in Connecticut for one year or more; **and**
- ✓ have rented an apartment, a room,

a mobile home, or are living in cooperative housing; **and**

- ✓ have an income below \$27,100/year if you are single **or** have a combined income below \$33,000/year if you are married.

Where to apply...

Apply at your town's Assessor's Office or the town's Social Services Department. Applications will be accepted from May 15, 2005 until September 15, 2005.

There is NO application fee or asset limits.

For more information, please call: Infoline at 2-1-1 or your Town Hall (the number can be found in the Blue Pages of your local telephone book).

Still have questions? Please call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320. ❖

Changes to Security Deposit Guarantee Program

Because of budgetary concerns, the Department of Social Services has recently made changes to who can apply for the Security Deposit Guarantee Program (SDGP). (This program saves renters from having to pay security deposits by guaranteeing landlords that DSS will pay for damages.) As of April 1, 2005, DSS will not accept applications for the program from people with Section 8 vouchers or people with Rental Assistance Program certificates.

But the program remains open to other people that DSS has determined are "homeless or are in danger of homelessness." This means that DSS should still accept applications from people who:

- 1) reside in an emergency shelter for the homeless
- 2) reside in emergency housing including a hotel, motel, hospital, state institution or shelter for victims of domestic violence, or the private residence of a friend or relative if the applicant was displaced within the past (60) days due to an eviction, catastrophic event or domestic violence.

(See Security Deposits page 4)

DSS Preferred Drug Lists for Prescription Drugs

On June 1, 2005, the Department of Social Services will begin requiring doctors or providers to seek "prior authorization" - authorization that must be obtained before prescribing drugs for elderly and disabled Medicaid and SAGA recipients who need Proton Pump Inhibitors which are not on DSS's preferred drug list. Only Prevacid and Protonix will be available without prior authorization.

On June 8, 2005, preferred drug lists will become effective for several other categories of drugs: Ace Inhibitors, Minimally Sedating Antihistamines, Bone Resorption Inhibitors, Calcium Channel Blockers, Intranasal Corticosteroids and Non-

Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs. A complete listing of all drugs on the preferred drug list in these categories is available at www.ctmedicalprogram.com/misc/pdl_list_0505.pdf. ❖

If your prescription is rejected at the pharmacy, here's what you should do:

1. Ask the pharmacist why the prescription is not being filled.
2. If the pharmacist says that the state or HMO won't pay for the drug or the drug is not covered by insurance, ask the pharmacist for a printout from the computer screen that shows the reason for the denial of payment for the drug. (Note: The reason may be something like "needs prior approval," "claim rejected," "requires step therapy," or "not covered.")
3. Call Statewide Legal Services (1-800-453-3320) for help.








Are You in Danger of Losing Your Section 8 Voucher?

Section 8 administrators, including the housing authorities, are discussing ways to stretch Section 8 funds. Terminating assistance of some current voucher holders is one way the administrators can stretch Section 8 funds.

What can you do to protect yourself?

Make sure you meet all your responsibilities as a tenant. If you are not sure what your responsibilities are, read your Section 8 handout or handbook. If you do not have one, contact your Section 8 administrator to ask for one. It's best to write and keep a copy of your letter.

Some things you must do:

-  Report all income changes for anyone in the household as soon as possible. This includes both increases and decreases in income. Report them in writing, not just a phone call, if you can. Keep a copy.
-  Report promptly when someone moves in or out of your household. Again, do this in writing, if you can. Keep a copy.
-  Do not move into a new apartment until Section 8 has inspected and approved the new place.
-  Show up on time for your recertification. Be sure to have ALL the paper work that is requested by your Section 8 worker. If an inspection of your apartment is scheduled, be sure you are there on time for the appointment to let the inspector in, or that you call before the appointment if you have to reschedule.
-  Comply with your responsibilities in your lease.

Termination: Following all the Section 8 rules will not guarantee you keep all your voucher benefits. However, you will be doing everything you can to keep this valuable benefit. Before you can be terminated, you have a right to a hearing. If you are threatened with termination or have any other problem using your voucher, call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 immediately.❖



The Care 4 Kids program has reopened to all working families with income below 50% of the state median income. It is critical that you spread the word about open enrollment, even if it creates another waiting list. Parents NEED the subsidies and if they don't apply, there will be no case for increased funding next year. Please spread the word: **Care 4 Kids is OPEN! Call 211 Infoline for an application.**

Early Care & Education Issues at the Legislature

The budget proposals from both Governor Rell and the Appropriations Committee seek to address the needs of early care and education. When a final budget is adopted, children whose parents seek high quality center-based care should be better served than they were last year. Here is the good and the bad:

Infrastructure: The state will probably establish an Early Childhood Cabinet that will work to bring fairness, equity and clarity to what is now a very fragmented patchwork of supports for families with young children. Much attention is also being paid to the quality and compensation of the early childhood workforce. Funding is proposed for short- and long-term initiatives to attract, educate, and retain good teachers. Facilities are in need of repair and replacement, and the number of classrooms must be increased if we are to meet the needs of all Connecticut's children. These concerns are addressed in the budget.

Reimbursement Rates: The Governor and legislators recognize, to a degree, that quality costs money every single day. Both have therefore addressed the reimbursement rates for some, but not all providers. There are proposals to increase School Readiness contribution rates per child in '06 and '07. In addition, the Appropriations Committee proposed increasing the unit rate for centers under contract with DSS.

Care 4 Kids child care subsidies will be level-funded, a reflection of the fact that most of these funds go to informal family-based care. ❖

(Thanks to CAHS for this update.)

Want to find out about starting a community garden in the Hartford area? Contact the Knox Park Foundation, Inc., 75 Laurel Street, Hartford at (860) 951-7694.



Update: Federal Budget Resolution Passed

On Thursday, April 28th the House and Senate Budget conferees reached an agreement on the 2006 fiscal year budget resolution. Both the Senate and House have passed the conference committee resolution.

Key points in the resolution: (adapted from an analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. More details are available on the Center's web site at: www.cbpp.org.)

Tax cuts total \$106 billion over 5 years. It is expected that the tax cuts will include extension of the capital gains and dividend tax cuts.

Cuts to entitlement programs and other mandatory programs total \$30.5 billion over 5 years, with \$34.7 billion of the cuts to be included in the reconciliation bill and \$4.2 billion in entitlement increases that would occur outside of reconciliation. The reconciliation bill would include significant reductions in low-income programs—\$10 billion in reductions to Medicaid, plus cuts in the Food Stamp Program.

Cuts to domestic discretionary programs (the part of the budget that includes education, veteran's health care, environmental protection, housing and many other program areas) total \$212 billion over 5 years.

Funding for defense and international discretionary programs would be increased by \$186 billion over 5 years, with most of the increase going to defense.

What's next?

Between now and September, House and Senate Committees will work on how to implement the conference agreement. It's expected

(See Budget page 4)



Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Coming Soon - Implementation Starting Now

On January 1, 2006, for the first time, Medicare will offer a limited prescription drug benefit referred to as Medicare Part D.

Many Medicare beneficiaries will have to pay towards their prescription costs. For low and moderate income Medicare beneficiaries, however, there is a low income subsidy program that will cover many of the out of pocket expenses.

Some people will receive this subsidy automatically; others will have to apply.

Who's automatically eligible for low-income subsidy?

- People who are currently receiving Medicaid and Medicare (knows as people who are "dually eligible") and
- People eligible for the Medicare Savings Programs, which pay the Part B premiums, deductibles and co-payments. (More information on the eligibility criteria for the Medicare Savings Programs, is available on the Connecticut Legal Services elder law website at www.ctelderlaw.org at the Government Benefits link.)

In the next few months, the Social Security Administration and the Connecticut Department of Social Services will be notifying beneficiaries of this new prescription plan and their possible eligibility for the low income subsidy on the following schedule:

In June:

- CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) notifies Medicare beneficiaries who are automatically eligible for the low-income subsidy that they do not have to apply for the subsidy. People who will get this notice include people with full Medicaid benefits, people who qualify for Medicare Savings Programs (QMB,

SLMB., and QI) and people with SSI who do not get health care through Medicaid.

SSA (Social Security Administration) will send out information to other beneficiaries it has identified as potentially eligible for the subsidy but who need to apply. **It is extremely important for all Medicare beneficiaries who are eligible for this low income prescription subsidy to apply.**

In The Fall:

DSS (Connecticut Department of Social Services) will send notices to the "dually eligible" notifying them that they will be losing their Medicaid prescription coverage effective January 1, 2006, and instead will be enrolled in Medicare Part D plan.

For more information, go to www.medicareadvocacy.org (Center for Medicare Advocacy,) or call CHOICES at 1-800-994-9422 or Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320. ❖

New CHHS Resource



Connecticut's Health and Human Services (CHSS) database, maintained by 2-1-1 Infoline/United Way of Connecticut, is on the web and accessible to all. The search engine has just been redesigned and you are invited to check it out by going to this site and trying out different searches. The address is: www.rtmdesigns.net/211uwct/.

While you are there, please do a name search for your agency and see if any information needs updating. Also, please give feedback if you can't find what you are looking for! (Go to "Contact Us" to send an email. Or call Carol Davis at 860-571-7526.)❖

Security Deposits (Cont. from page 1)

3) are served with a notice to quit in a summary process action or

4) cannot remain in permanent housing because of any of the following reasons: a) a judgment was entered against them in a summary process or foreclosure action; b) they left to escape domestic violence; c) the unit was made uninhabitable because of catastrophic event (like a fire or flood); d) an order to vacate the unit by a local code enforcement official; e) they are sharing the housing with a tenant who is being evicted or is engaged in criminal activity; f) they were illegally locked out by a landlord and they have filed a police complaint; g) they have been living with a tenant who has received a preliminary notice or notice to quit because of lapse of time; or h) a child in the family has been found to have lead poisoning because of an abnormal level of lead in the unit.

If you fall into one of these groups, then you may still be eligible for a security deposit — and DSS must still accept your application! If you have problems applying or are told you cannot apply and you think you are still eligible, call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320. ❖

Budget (cont. from page 3)

that this "reconciliation" legislation will come out of committees in September and be sent to the floor of the House and Senate for consideration.

(Thanks to CT Voices for Children for this summary.)❖

Buy Fresh & Local

For a listing of Connecticut Farmers' Markets locations, go to <http://marketplace.chef2chef.net/farmer-markets/states/connecticut.htm> - Some markets do accept WIC.❖

CABHN Meetings
held 1st Friday of the month

9:30 - 11:30 am

Upcoming Meetings:

June 10th

Community Renewal Team
(CRT)
555 Windsor St., Hartford

June 10th Topics:

Legislative Wrap-Up

Plans for the Summer

See you there!

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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