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CABHN FEVER



Expanded Energy and Weatherization Assistance Available

A new state law expands available energy assistance. Households with a higher income are now eligible for benefits, and the amount of benefits has been expanded, including greater benefits for households who have heat included in their rent payment. Apply for assistance if your income is less than the amounts listed below:

<u>HouseholdSize</u>	<u>Monthly Income</u>
1	\$2,236
2	\$2,924
3	\$3,612
4	\$4,300
5	\$4,988
6	\$5,676

Apply at the local Community Action Agency (CAA) or call Infoline (211) or the DSS Energy Line (1-800-842-1132) for information on the closest application site.

If you have already applied for assistance and were awarded benefits before the law increasing benefits was passed, the CAA will send you a new notice telling you of the increased benefit amount. You don't have to reapply to get the increase.

Because of the increased amount of energy assistance benefits, the arrearage forgiveness programs should have lower requirements for customer payments. These programs are run by Yankee Gas, SCG, CNG, CL&P and UI for their energy assistance recipient customers who use their utility service for heat.

The same new law that increases energy assistance, also increases weatherization assistance for low income households. The new HEARTH program is only available this winter, and it provides heating equipment tune-ups, water heater blankets, window

film and programmable thermostats. The program will run through June 30, 2006 only. DSS is responsible for delivering these benefits to energy assistance recipients. Because of the availability of HEARTH benefits, the cost of a clean, tune and test of an energy assistance recipient's furnaces will not be deducted from their basic benefits. ❖



Nontraditional Employment for Women (NEW)

Women, get the skills that pay the bills! Train for a career in the building trades with the Nontraditional Employment for Women (NEW) program. NEW is a training program

which exposes women to the building trades and trains women to be ready to enter into an apprenticeship as an electrician, plumber, carpenter, ironworker, painter or laborer. Some skills covered in this programs are blueprint reading, workplace safety rules, job related math and welding.

Where? Ironworkers Local #15, 20-28 Sargeant Street (Veeder Place) Hartford, CT.

When? Mid-February through mid-May 2006. Mon., Tues., Wed., 5:30-8:30 PM.

Requirements? A high school diploma or GED, valid CT driver's license, dependable transportation, going to classes, must live in the greater Hartford area.

To apply or if you have questions, call Doreen at CT Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (860) 240-8300. Deadline for applications is December 2, 2005. ❖

HUSKY: Find Out if You Qualify for Coverage

Thousands who may qualify for HUSKY coverage under the expanded income rules have not applied. The Department of Social Service's numbers show that a quarter of those who had medical coverage under the temporary extension, did not complete the review required for continued

eligibility. This includes some whose addresses had changed. Others may now qualify but never heard about the change; there has been little publicity about it. If you have a child under age 19 and income below the amounts in this chart, you should qualify. ❖

HUSKY Parent Coverage



Parents with children on HUSKY who have family income between 100 - 150% of the federal poverty level are once again eligible for HUSKY coverage. There may be future costs to parents of \$1 per Dr.'s visit and a \$25 per month premium but those costs have not yet been approved or implemented. Use this chart to see if you are income eligible and call your family's HUSKY caseworker to enroll!

Family size	Your family's yearly income is below
2 people	\$19,245
3 people	\$24,135
4 people	\$29,025
5 people	\$33,915



From CMS: Important Answers to Questions About Your New Medicare Drug Coverage

What is Medicare prescription drug coverage?

Medicare prescription drug coverage is insurance. Private companies will provide the coverage through Medicare drug plans.

Medicare drug plans will help you pay for both brand-name and generic drugs you need. Most plans will have a list of drugs covered by the plan. The drug list may not include your specific drug, but most should provide a similar drug that is safe and effective.

Drug plans must contract with pharmacies in your area. Check with the plan to make sure the pharmacies in the plan are convenient to you. Some plans allow you to get your prescriptions through the mail.

What should you do now?

- ✓ Read materials your plan sends you about the drug plan Medicare will enroll you in if you don't choose a plan by December 31, 2005.
- ✓ Compare plans and find one that works for you
- ✓ Find out which plans cover the prescriptions you take and what pharmacies you can use to fill prescriptions.
- ✓ Look at www.medicare.gov and get personalized drug plan info. If you don't have a computer, enlist a family member or friend who does, or go to your local library or senior center and ask for assistance.
- ✓ Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for a list of the specific plans. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.
- ✓ Call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for free personalized health insurance counseling. The Connecticut telephone number (for in-state calls only) is 1-800-994-9422.
- ✓ Look for Medicare-related events in your community or for information about events in your local newspaper or listen for information on the radio.

NAMI: "In Our Own Voice"

In Our Own Voice is a recovery education program sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Speakers relate their own experience in recovery from mental illness. Topics include treatment, coping with dark days, successes and hopes for the future. The program lasts about 45 minutes and is accompanied by a video presentation with question/answer time following.

To date, "In Our Own Voice" speakers have presented to a wide variety of groups including law enforcement officers for crisis intervention trainings, colleges, high schools, hospitals and many other groups.

If you are interested in obtaining a speaker for your organization, workplace, high school, or college, please contact Victoria Molta at National Alliance on Mental Illness toll free at 800-215-3021. If you are in recovery from mental illness and are interested in training as a speaker for this program, you may call the same number. Speakers are given small stipends for their presentations. ❖

CT Food Bank needs help, now more than ever...

Nationally, our attention has been turned to the Gulf Coast following the horrible tragedy of the recent hurricanes. Locally, we must remember the tens of thousands of our Connecticut neighbors who struggle to put food on their tables every day.

Please support Connecticut Food Bank and their mission to alleviate hunger. For information about donating to Connecticut Food Bank, check out www.ctfoodbank.org. ❖

One Connecticut Public Forums



11/17 - New Britain City Hall, 27 West Main Street, 6-8pm.
Topic: Health care

Torrington Chamber of Commerce, 9-11am. Topic: One Connecticut and Legislative advocacy.

11/30 - Norwich/ New London, Rose City Senior Center, 8 Mahan Drive, 6:00 - 8:00pm.

12/7 Milford, Milford City Hall, 70 West River Road, 5:30 - 7:30pm Topic: Health care

Topic: Health care/ Medicare D

For more information, contact Katie Martin at One Connecticut (203) 288-6424. ❖

12/1 - Torrington One Connecticut Educational event for Providers,



Medicare Part D - Prescription Drug Benefit - Coming on January 1

State Works Toward Wrap Around to Protect ConnPACE and Medicaid Participants

The Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit (Part D) is moving toward its January 1 implementation date.

Important upcoming dates:

November 15 - Medicare participants can begin enrolling in plans.

January 1 - Medicaid prescription drug coverage ends for Medicaid participants who are also Medicare participants (dually eligibles), except for a very few drugs which are not available through the Medicare benefit.

Dually eligibles must be enrolled in a Medicare drug plan by January 1.

CMS, the federal agency overseeing implementation of Medicare Part D, will enroll dually eligibles in a drug plan to make sure that they do not lose coverage.

In early November, CMS began mailing letters to dually eligibles to inform them of which drug plan they will be enrolled in unless they pick a different plan. These letters are on orange paper. Dually eligibles can change to a different plan before January 1 or at any time after that. Getting on the right plan is important because the plans offer different drugs. You need to match your needs with the drugs available on the plan you pick.

Assistance in selecting a plan is available by calling CHOICES (1-800-

994-9422). Other places to get help:

Statewide Legal Services - 1-800-453-3320

www.medicareadvocacy.org (Center for Medicare Advocacy).

NAMI Connecticut is offering Peer Education services to assist consumers of mental health services and their family members in transitioning to Medicare Part D. Contact Alicia Woodsby or Janice Shilosky at NAMI-CT to schedule a session: 860-882-0236 or (toll free) 800-215-3021.

Action at the State Legislature

The Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefit will not offer the same prescription drug coverage as Medicaid and ConnPACE. In particular, even for low-income participants, \$1 to \$5 co-pays will be required and drugs which are not on the formulary of the plan you select will not be covered. The state legislature is examining ways that the state can fill in these gaps. On November 2, the legislature called a special session to consider these issues. There was a public hearing on this issue on November 9 and the issue may be resolved by the time that you receive this newsletter. Go to the LARCC website (www.larcc.org) for updated information on state legislative action. ❖

Insurance Premium Increases for HUSKY B Children Repealed

The Connecticut General Assembly recently voted to repeal two increases in premiums for those children receiving health insurance through the state's HUSKY B program. The Department of Social Services estimated that approximately 2200 Connecticut children would lose their health care because of the increased fees. Most of these children would have been forced off the program because their parents were unable to keep up with the monthly payments which were increased on October 1.

The increases were passed this spring as part of the 2005-2007 state budget. Families earning from 185-235% of the federal poverty level were required to pay a new premium of \$30 a month per child (or \$50 for more than 1 child). These premiums have been repealed.

Premiums for families with incomes between 235-300% of the federal poverty level were increased to \$50 a month per child (or \$75 for more than one child) but now have been returned to \$30 a month per child (or \$50 for more than one child).

Gov. Rell had also recognized the harm that these program changes would have caused and had suspended the implementation of the new premiums until the legislature could fix the issue. ❖

Help Starts Here: 2-1-1

Whether you want to give or get help, Infoline at 2-1-1 is the confidential and free number to call. An Infoline caseworker can help you find information, learn about your options, or deal with a crisis. As we get ready for winter, Infoline can help by telling you about the many places that offer children's toys and holiday baskets, where you can donate new or used items, or where to find energy assistance or a winter coat. ❖



New CAHS Report : Sowing Prosperity

Sowing Prosperity: Low-Income Working Families and Connecticut's Economic Future is a report by the Connecticut Association for Human Services which highlights the successful policies already in place to address family economic self-sufficiency issues, and describes how to complete the work that needs to be done to ensure family self sufficiency.

A press conference will be held with the release of this report on December 5, 2005 at 10:00 AM at the Legislative Office Building, Hartford. Guest Speaker: Denise Nappier, CT State Treasurer.

You are invited to attend to support policies that promote family economic self-sufficiency. Call (860) 951-2212, ext. 240 for more information. ❖



Save the Dates!

End Hunger CT Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting will be held at Manchester Area Conference of Churches on Thursday, December 6th from 4:30-6:30PM. Help EHC! celebrate its accomplishments and honor legislators and community members committed to anti-hunger and food security work. Please call Lucy Nolan (860) 560-2100 ext. 13 with questions. ❖

For the holidays... ❖ Adopt A Service Family

Would you like to help out a low income family whose loved one has been recently deployed or has just returned from active service overseas? Call this number to inquire: 800-858-2677. ❖

Making Women Visible:

A symposium on women's issues at the state Capitol. Thursday, February 16th, 2006, 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM.

For more information, call the PCSW at 860-240-8300, email pcsw@cga.ct.gov or visit the website at www.cga.ct.gov/PCSW/ ❖

The 2005 Summary of Public Acts is now available online at www.larcc.org. If you would like a printed copy, one is available for a small donation to CABHN of \$15.00. Checks should be made payable to CABHN, 80 Jefferson St., Hartford, CT 06106.

CABHN Meetings Announcement

9:30 - 11:30 am

Upcoming Meetings:

Dec. 2

Federal Budget, Medicare

*Part D, 2006 Legislative
Session*

Feb. 10

Review of Governor's Budget

Community Renewal Team
(CRT)

555 Windsor St., Hartford

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.

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

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