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CABHN FEVER

Care 4 Kids Program Temporarily Re-opened



The Department of Social Services has temporarily reopened the Care 4 Kids program, which provides child care assistance to eligible working families and families on Temporary Family Assistance who are working or engaged in education and training to obtain employment. The program has reopened temporarily to eligible families only until December 31, 2009. The program stopped accepting applications in May 2009 due to state financial difficulties in an effort to ensure families already enrolled in the program could continue receiving services. New applications were then placed on a waiting list.

The Department of Social Services will now:

- Notify the approximately 3,600 families on the waiting list that the program has reopened.
- Accept new applications from working families with annual earnings up to 75% of state median income level until Dec., 31, 2009 (i.e. \$73,281 for a family of four). This income level is higher than the current eligibility ceiling of 50% of state median income to apply.
- Allow currently-served families to remain eligible until their earnings reach 75% of the state median income level until Dec. 31, 2009.

For more information about submitting applications or general information about Care 4 Kids, please visit www.ctcare4kids.com or call 1-888-214-KIDS (5437) Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm.

A Reminder for HUSKY and SAGA Participants

In September 2008, all participants in the HUSKY and SAGA programs became a part of a dental program called the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership (CTDHP).

If you are enrolled in SAGA: CTDHP is a provider of dental services and works with your medical providers to make sure you remain healthy.

If you are enrolled in the HUSKY program: CTDHP works with the four HUSKY options: three HUSKY managed medical care plans (Aetna Better Health, AmeriChoice by United Health Care, Community Health Network of Connecticut) and HUSKY Primary Care (PCCM) to make sure you and your child remain healthy. It is important that you and your children make regular visits to a dentist.

To All SAGA and HUSKY Participants: If you or your child have not visited a dentist in the last 6 months, CTDHP wants to help you to schedule an appointment:

CALL 1-866-420-2924, Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. If you do not have a dentist, CTDHP will find one near you. You do not have to pay for preventive dental care under the CTDHP Plan. Transportation assistance is available for HUSKY A participants only.

The H1N1 Virus In Connecticut

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has raised the level of Connecticut's flu activity to "widespread," the highest level of activity. Governor M. Jodi Rell announced Nov. 5 that the state has received 3,000 bottles of pediatric Tamiflu, used to help fight infection, from the federal government to help treat growing cases of the H1N1

influenza among children. Children are among the most vulnerable to the virus.

Contact your health care provider to ask if they will be getting the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. If you do not have a health care provider, but would like to get the vaccine, contact your local health department or district responsible for coordinating and organizing vaccination sites in your community. You can find that local health department or district by going to www.ct.gov/dph/mda or by calling 211.

For more information, please call our hotline: 1-800-830-9426. Right now, there is not a lot of vaccine available. Certain groups of people should get the vaccine first because they are most at

(See H1N1 p. 4)

Christmas Toy Program

The holidays are quickly approaching. The Salvation Army Community Services Department is offering its annual Christmas Toy Program. Registration began on Tuesday, November 10 and ends on December 3.



Required documents for registration:

- ✓ Photo ID and Social Security Card
- ✓ Birth certificate for each child (Long form)
- ✓ Address verification (utility bill or rent receipt)
- ✓ Income verification (pay stub, unemployment benefits, SSI, Social Security)
- ✓ Parents/Guardians must have legal custody of the child(ren) and will need to present proof.

Registration is first come, first served and by appointment only! For more information, call: The Salvation Army, 217 Washington St., Hartford, CT 06106 (860) 543-8413.

It Could Be Payback Time: Connecticut Gets More Manpower to Investigate Wage Complaints

Connecticut employers may be paid a visit in the near future by a federal investigator looking into possible violations of wage and hour laws.

U.S. Department of Labor added 250 investigators nationwide, a move prompted by a congressional report released this spring that said the department's Wage and Hour Division "frequently responded inadequately to complaints." A recent national study found that employers are "regularly and systematically" not paying workers what they're legally owed, either in overtime or minimum wage, under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

A report released in early September by the National Employment Law Project, a workers' rights group, offered a snapshot of what might be happening nationwide. The group surveyed 4,000 workers in low-wage industries in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago and found that in any given week, workers in just those three cities were losing more than \$56.4 million due to labor law violations, such as the failure to pay overtime.

Connecticut likely will get two or three new investigators. Connecticut currently has 10 investigators.

Worker Classification

One common complaint involves the classification of employees as exempt or non-exempt. Employees who are considered to be managers are exempt from receiving overtime pay. However, if it turns out that, regardless of their job title, the employees really have no managerial duties, the employer can be held accountable and forced to pay overtime.

Another potential pitfall is the use of independent contractors. Some companies define employees as independent contractors to save money on overtime pay and benefits. It can be a fine line, with disputes mostly turning on just how much control a company exerts over exactly what a worker does and when he or she does it.

FedEx has been embroiled in numerous lawsuits, including one filed by Connecticut plaintiffs, accusing it of misclassifying workers as independent contractors. Fellow delivery giant UPS was taken to federal court in California last month for allegedly misclassifying certain workers as exempt employees.

Workers are eligible to recoup wages going back as many as three years, depending on the nature of the violation. The federal labor department reported that it recovered more than \$185 million in back wages for more than 228,000 workers nationwide during 2008. Both of those figures are down from 2007 when about 342,000 workers received more than \$220 million in back wages.

The Connecticut Department of Labor reported that it recovered \$8.1 million in wages in the past year, an increase of more than \$1 million from two years ago.

Do you have questions or concerns?

Contact:

The State Department of Labor at (860) 263-6790. You can call for free from your local unemployment office or call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 or (860) 344-0380 from information and advice.

Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut has produced a series of one-page flyers on a variety of employment topics in English and Spanish. Go to www.larcc.org, scroll down to Work/Unemployment to choose a topic from the series.

COHI Annual Meeting

The Connecticut Oral Health Initiative (COHI) is pleased to invite you to our annual meeting on Thursday, December 10th from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm at the Four Points by Sheraton at 275 Research Parkway in Meriden. Our keynote speaker is Tricia Brooks, Senior Fellow at the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families. Ms. Brooks will discuss the opportunities

(See COHI page. 3)

Popular Citizens' Election Program Waits For State Action

Last year, elections for state government in Connecticut underwent a major makeover. For the first time, the Citizens' Election Program offered candidates the opportunity to run for public office without relying on big money contributions and special interests. The inaugural run of the program in the 2008 elections was a big success. Today, more than 80 percent of office holders in the statehouse are serving their constituents without having taken any special interest cash. Those elected praised the new program as a way to curb the appearance of corruption and let them focus their campaigns on voters and volunteers instead of big money donors.

Despite the success and praise the Citizens' Elections Program has received, there have been a few bumps in the road. Third Party organizations in Connecticut filed suit against the Citizens' Election Program and won, stating unfairness to minor parties. Connecticut's Attorney General is appealing the decision and is confident he will prevail, but it is unclear how long the appeal will take. In light of this decision, a coalition of community groups has organized support and urging Governor M. Jodi Rell (R) and leaders at the state capitol to change those elements of the program so it will be up and running for next year's elections.

Common Cause in Connecticut has joined with partnering organizations in calling on the Governor and state leaders to convene a special session to debate and pass the necessary changes so the Citizens' Elections Program. Candidates for next year's election are planning to organize to qualify under the program and proponents are urging state leaders to act now in order for the program to continue.

Supporters of the Citizens' Election Program are urged to call Governor Rell at 1-800-406-1527 and ask her to support the call for a special session to make the necessary changes.

Ending Childhood Hunger: A Team Effort

In the past several months, President Obama and his administration have made the following clear: childhood hunger needs to end by the year 2015. Obama has remained diligent in his efforts to achieve this goal, and many have been rewarding him for such efforts. The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) has expressed its support for Obama's plan. It has devised a seven strategy plan that will allow President Obama's goal to be achieved in full.

The first suggestion of FRAC is that economic growth be restored and better jobs with higher wages be created for those who have trouble making ends meet. Given the recent economic downturn, the number of those in poverty has greatly increased. It is apparent that many changes need to be made to help those who have been hit the hardest by the struggling economy. President Obama and Congress have begun the rebuilding process with the creation of the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act"; however, there are many other steps that need to be taken to move towards meeting Obama's goal. FRAC would like to see that all Americans get a fair share of economic growth. This means fiscal and monetary policies that support economic growth, new full-time job creation and job training, more support for child care, and higher wages and more benefits for all jobs.

FRAC also supports raising the incomes of the lowest-income families. Similarly, Obama has expressed the need to reduce poverty by providing tax relief for working families, raising minimum wage, expanding income tax credit, and providing affordable, accessible health care to all. The strengthening of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is also needed to reduce childhood hunger. An increase in SNAP benefits would allow a family to obtain more healthy food during the months they need assistance. Requirements must

also be revised to allow more people to be eligible to receive SNAP.

Child nutrition programs, which provide school lunch and breakfast, afterschool and summer food, and food at child care sites, must also be strengthened if President Obama's goal is to be reached by 2015. FRAC recommends that more schools participate in the federal free and reduced-price school meal programs—this means eliminating certain paperwork that holds up the process of enrolling in such programs. Similarly, FRAC would like to see more children in child care receive an adequate number of nutritious meals each day, regardless of the amount of time they spend in the child care facility. President Obama and FRAC have also stressed the need for the availability of nutritious, reasonably-priced foods in every community in the United States. By the use of national loans and grants, supermarkets that are well-stocked with nutritious foods can be built in underprivileged communities to allow everyone a chance to buy healthy foods at reasonable costs.

Finally, FRAC and the Obama administration emphasize the importance of getting involved: childhood hunger will not end unless the entire federal government, state governments, localities, and non-profit organizations all lend a helping hand to feed hungry children. By engaging all areas of government, such as the Department of Justice, the Department of Education, and the Treasury Department, larger steps can be taken to end childhood hunger by 2015.

Meet Our Intern!

Hello readers! My name is Megan Herrmann and I have the privilege of being one of LARCC's interns for the next few months. I am a senior at UCONN this year and am graduating in May. As an English major, I love to write, which is why writing for CABHN Fever and working with LARCC will be a special treat for me. I have always had an interest in law; I am excited to explore the advocacy side of it now. Exploring new issues that arise in both the state and the country will be particularly interesting for me, and I am thankful I have the privilege of writing about these issues in CABHN Fever. I look forward to hearing from you!

Changes in Medicare Part D Drug Low Income Subsidy

On January 1, 2010, there will be new exemptions from income and resources for people applying for the Low Income Subsidy (LIS) in the Medicare Part D Drug Program. Non-financial support, generally referred to as "in-kind support and maintenance," will no longer be considered income and the cash surrender value of a life insurance policy will no longer be considered a resource.

These changes are not effective until January 1 and the Social Security Administration (SSA) will process applications filed in 2009 under the current rules. SSA suggests that advocates screen clients carefully to determine whether they should apply for the Low Income Subsidy in 2009 or wait until the new rules take effect in 2010.

Everyone who has been found ineligible for the low-income subsidy will be contacted early in 2010 with information about the new rules and an invitation to reapply. *(adapted from material from the Center for Medicare Advocacy, www.medicareadvocacy.org)*

COHI (continued from p. 2)

and challenges in advancing oral health coverage at the state level.

Policy-makers are struggling with a severe fiscal crisis. As our legislators work to prioritize the needs of our neighbors, and deliberate how our public funds will be allocated, COHI and our oral health allies want to state the case for oral health. To attend the meeting please contact us at (860) 246-2644 ext. 200 or email us at register@ctoralhealth.org (be sure to provide your contact information).

H1N1 (Cont. from p. 1)

risk for H1N1 flu.

Those who should get vaccinated against H1N1 include:

For the nasal spray (the nasal spray is only approved for healthy people ages 4 to 49 – it is not approved for pregnant women):

- Healthy children ages 2 to 18
- Healthy caregivers and people who live with children under 6 months old
- Healthy healthcare workers and EMS personnel

For the shot:

- Pregnant women
- Household contacts and caregivers of infants less than 6 months old
- All children ages 6 months to 4 years old
- Children ages 5 to 18 with high-risk medical conditions
- Healthcare workers and EMS personnel

As more vaccine is made, it will become available to those people who are not in the target groups. Current studies show that people who are over the age of 65 are less likely to get H1N1 than younger people. Once there is more vaccine, people over the age of 65 should get the vaccine as well.

In Hartford, 15 schools will begin providing the H1N1 vaccine later in November. These schools include: Bulkeley High School, Weaver High School, Hartford Public High School, Classical Magnet School, Sport and Medical Sciences Academy, University High School of Science and Engineering, Bellizzi Middle School, Hartford Magnet Middle School, Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts, Sanchez Elementary School, M.D. Fox Elementary School, MLK Elementary School, SAND Elementary School, Moylan Elementary School, and Noah Webster Micro Society Magnet School. To find out exact dates/times at these locations, call (860) 757-9311.

Visit www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch for general flu information.

Upcoming CABHN/FESN Meeting

Friday

December 18, 2009

9:30-11:30 A.M.

Location:

**Community Renewal Team
(CRT)
555 Windsor Avenue
Hartford, CT**

Topic:

To Be Announced

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

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**ARE YOU AN ADULT LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENT
IN THE UNITED STATES LESS THAN 5 YEARS
AND ON STATE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE
(MEDICAID OR HUSKY A)?**

Do you or your family use the state medical assistance program (Medicaid or HUSKY A) to get important health services?

Did you know that a state law was passed which, **effective December 1, 2009**, ends the medical assistance program for legal permanent residents who entered the U.S. less than five years ago (unless they are children, pregnant women or were in nursing homes or on the home care program for elders as of September 8, 2009)?

After that date, the only medical coverage available for these legal permanent residents will be for extreme medical emergencies.

People who want to keep medical assistance for these non-citizens would like to speak to you!

If you are:

- 1) a legal non-citizen in the country less than five years;
- 2) on state medical assistance; and
- 3) have an ongoing need for medical treatment.

Please contact:
Sheldon Toubman, (203) 946-4811, ext. 148
e-mail: stoubman@nhlegal.org
Nick Yorio, (860) 541-5053
e-mail: nyorio@ghla.org